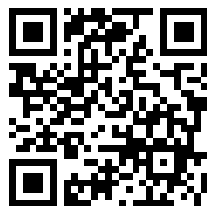
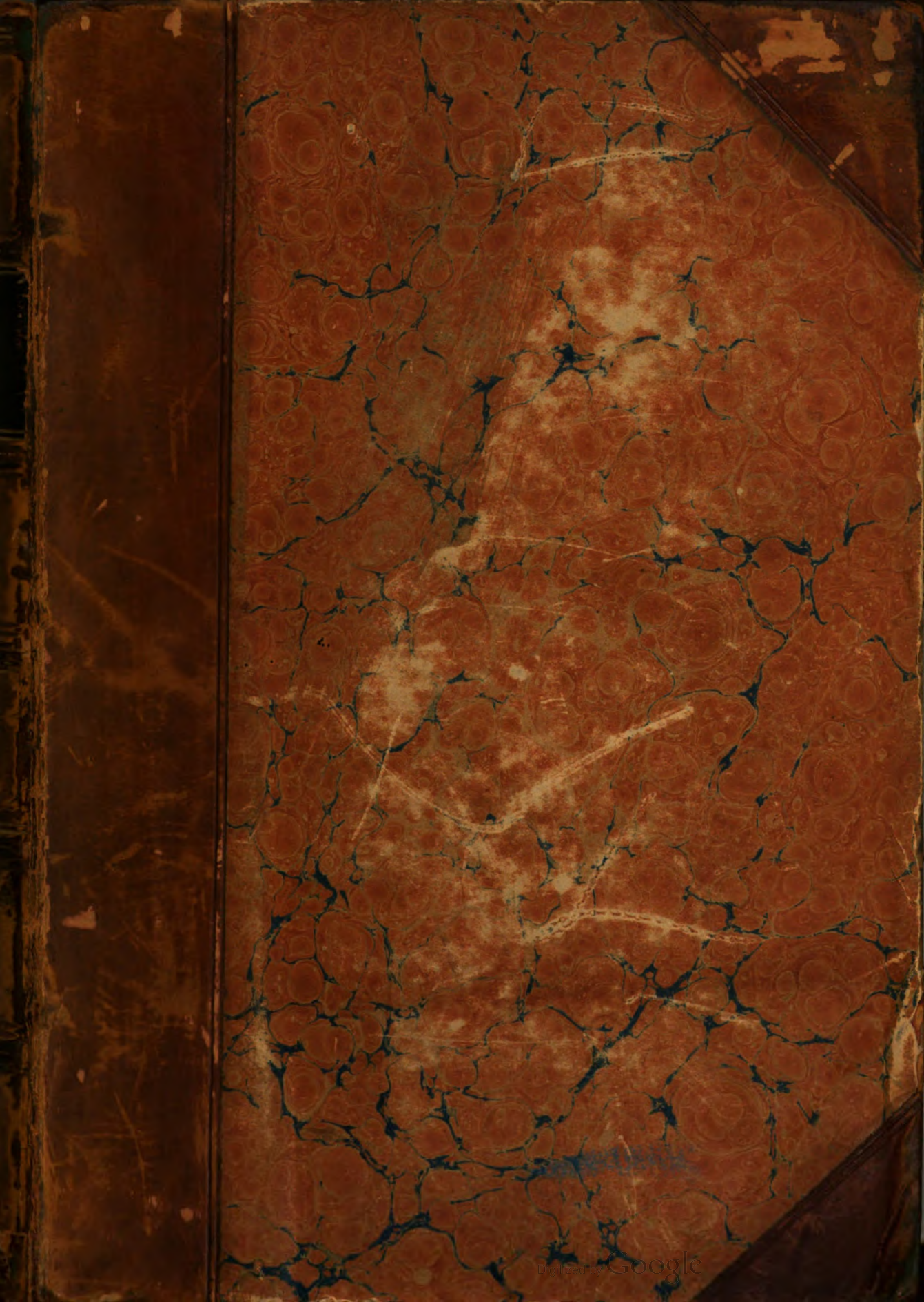

This is a reproduction of a library book that was digitized by Google as part of an ongoing effort to preserve the information in books and make it universally accessible.

GoogleTM books

<http://books.google.com>





Green.



Class 052 058

Acc. 99725

o.s. v. 30

UNIVERSITY OF IOWA



3 1858 044 952 483

STATE UNIVERSITY
OF IOWA
LIBRARY

ONCE A WEEK

NEW SERIES

VOLUME XIII.

JANUARY TO AUGUST, 1874.

U.S. 30

LONDON:
PUBLISHED AT THE OFFICES,
19, TAVISTOCK STREET, W.C.

YH293VBI 31AD

ADD TO
YH293VBI

052

058

0.8.4.30

LONDON:
SWEETING AND CO., PRINTERS,
80, GRAY'S INN ROAD, HOLBORN.

225, 13

v. 13

1874

Jan - June

CONTENTS.

Vol. XIII. begins with the number for January 3rd, 1874.

	PAGE		PAGE
JACK'S SISTER.	1, 23, 45, 67, 89, 111, 133, 155, 177, 199, 221, 243, 265, 287, 309, 331, 353, 375, 397, 419, 441, 463, 485, 507, 529, 551, 573, 595, 617, 639, 661, 683, 705, 727, 749.	THE CASUAL OBSERVER—AN UNPLEASANT PLACE	99
ONLY A YEAR.	252, 277, 297, 319, 339, 363, 386, 412, 434, 457, 478, 502, 525, 545, 567, 590, 612, 634.	SCENTED WITH LAVENDER—OUR CHILDREN	116
ANGUISH IN PRINT.	259, 282, 305, 327, 346, 368, 391, 407, 428, 450, 471, 493, 515, 539, 561, 581, 603, 626, 649, 671.	THE PLANETARY ENGINE	121
EXTRACT OF POPPIES.	9	OUR DAUGHTER PATTY	123, 143, 166, 185
THE ABDUCTION OF THE O'BANAGHER.	13, 35, 56, 81, 101.	FAMOUS PERSECUTIONS	126
AN OLD ESSAY ON QUACKS	19	THE GHOST IN THE SNOW.	127, 149, 171, 192, 214, 238.
TABLE TALK.	21, 43, 66, 88, 110, 132, 154, 176, 198, 219, 241, 263, 286, 308, 330, 351, 374, 396, 418, 439, 462, 484, 506, 527, 550, 571, 594, 616, 638, 660, 682, 704, 726, 748, 765.	THE ESCAPE FROM WORCESTER	139
SCENTED WITH LAVENDER—AT SUNDOWN.	31	A SPECULATION IN CORN	145
THE CASUAL OBSERVER—"OSSY"	39	A LAWYER'S BILL	147
HUMAN SACRIFICE	42	THE CASUAL OBSERVER—SEEKING FOR LIGHT	165
THE CASUAL OBSERVER—DOING NAUTICAL	54	CORN WITHOUT SPECULATION	170
JUSTICE IN THE CITY	58	THE CASUAL OBSERVER—LOOKING INTO IT	182
HOW I WAS NOT MARRIED	62	ME AND MY DOGS—JORUM	189
OFF THE TRACK IN NORWAY	78, 106	LAYS OF THE SHORT ONE—THE COPPER AND THE WICKED WORD	197
GAME	84	THE CASUAL OBSERVER—WITH THE POLICE	204
THE SICILIAN VESPERS	87	THE MAGIC MIRROR	206
PUTTING ONE'S FOOT IN IT	103	THE WILMINGTON GIANT	209
		AUSTIN CHASUBLE'S LOVE CHANCE	210, 232
		LAYS OF THE SHORT ONE—THE RAINY DAY	219
		THE CASUAL OBSERVER—UP EARLY ON PURPOSE	231
		LOST KEYS	236
		LAYS OF THE SHORT ONE—BITTER BEER	241

	PAGE		PAGE
ME AND MY DOGS—SPOT	249	A RUSSIAN CRECHE AND CONVALESCENT HOME	599
THE CASUAL OBSERVER—VERY FISHY	258	THE CASUAL OBSERVER—AT BILLINGSGATE	601
LANÇON	275	THE FIRE ESCAPE MAN	615
THE CASUAL OBSERVER—BIRD-CATCHERS' MARKET	281	AN INDIAN POLICE COURT	631
SCENTED WITH LAVENDER—DEATH THE TERRIBLE	292	A BATTLE WITH THE SIKHS	644
TWO NIGHTS IN THE COUNTRY	301, 314	THE CASUAL OBSERVER—AT THE LONDON HOSPITAL	654
TEN O'CLOCK AT THE MONUMENT	322	IN CAMP AT ALDERSHOT	658
THE CASUAL OBSERVER—AMONGST THE SPIRITS	336	AT THE NORTH POLE	666, 690
IN THE DARK	343, 360	A SAVAGE PLANT	677
OH, GIVE US FOOD	346	THE WHITE NILE	678
WORK FOR THE WITS	358	SEASONABLE ADVICE	679
THE CASUAL OBSERVER—AT A FIRE-APRON FACTORY	367	THE FRENCH AT HOME	687
OUR ELECTION	380, 402	GOING FOR A SOLDIER	693
A PAYING COMPLAINT	384	A FEW WORDS ON MUSIC	696
JACK AND HIS GREEN	410	TOMBS OF THE KINGS OF GOLCONDA	698
WHAT'S YOUR NAME?	423	SUITED TO HER STATION	699
MRS. VAUGHAN'S SISTER	425, 445	RECOLLECTIONS OF MANITOBA	701
A HOLIDAY IN THE NORTH. 454, 476, 512, 564, 577, 608, 622, 656.		THE DEATH OF A HERO	703
HOUSE AND HOME	468	THE CASUAL OBSERVER—AMONGST THE MARINES	710
THE CASUAL OBSERVER — WITH THE CASUALS—DICKENS ON CANVAS	490	TO JAMAICA—1750	712
BULLIONDUST'S SECRETARY. 499, 521, 534, 554.		A CAVE TALE	715
BOBBING FOR WHALES	523	A HAUNTED HOLE	717
ONCE A WEEK	527	AMONGST THE BEGGARS	720
THE CASUAL OBSERVER—AMONGST THE LITTLE ONES	544	A WOMAN'S WISH	723, 742, 760
THE CASUAL OBSERVER—AT HURLINGHAM	559	MY FISHERMAN	732
DOGGREL. BY A DOG	571	OLD FASHIONS	735
THE GREEN-EYED MONSTER LOOSE	586	A BRUSH WITH THE INDIANS	736, 762
		THE SEVEN METALS	747
		IN THE FAR SOUTH	751
		THE ELDERLY LOVER	755
		THE QUEEN'S ENGLISH IN DORSET	760
		A BRIGHT LIGHT	765

ONCE A WEEK

NEW SERIES.

No. 314.

January 3, 1874.

Price 2d.

JACK'S SISTER; OR, WOMANLY PAST QUESTION.

CHAPTER I.
BEREFT.



O-oo-o! Oh, dear!—oh, dear!”

“Hold your row there, will you?”

A rough, boyish voice, that which spoke last—unusually gruff and deep for a boy, and especially for such a round-faced, bullet-headed urchin as the young gentleman who, crouched on the coalscuttle, with his feet on the fender, his short grey trousers dragged up so as to show a liberal allowance of sturdy, bruised leg, untidy sock, and thick, round-toed boot, presented anything but a congenial or companionable aspect to

the smaller boy, sprawling disconsolately along the broad, worn cushions of the window seat; and keeping up a plaintive sound between whining and crying, which stopped for a moment at the rough remonstrance of his elder—but only to burst out again in a more subdued key.

“Oh! dear—oh! dear—I’m so tired; and I wish Enid would come. I do hate being shut up here so.”

No answer this time beyond an impatient shrug; and the little boy drew himself up into a sitting position; and, pushing the

damp black locks off his round, pale face with a little thin hand, like a girl’s, looked nervously across the dusky, low-ceilinged school-room, strewn with books, toys, and slates, thrown about in every direction; and dimly lit by the fading twilight, and a few smouldering lumps of coal in the large, old-fashioned grate. There was nothing cheering in that prospect—nothing but darkness, litter, and confusion. For the very maps adorning the dull green walls were hanging askant; the glass doors of the bookcase stood open, with a couple of books tumbling out; one of the heavy, faded damask curtains draping the big, diamond-paned window had got dragged down at the corner, so as to leave three huge brass rings wagging disconsolately in the air; and some one had left a wash hand basin, with a couple of towels and a medicine bottle, on the heavy oak table, which, blotched with ink and hacked with penknives, stood in the middle of the worn Turkey carpet which covered the floor. No, not a cheerful room then, by any means—not even taking into account the yellow-headed lad in the coalscuttle; and with something like a compromise between a sob and a sigh, Merle Kinnardson turned to the window for comfort.

That was better: not very much, but a trifle better. For the house stood in an angle of the road; and, looking over the high garden wall, he could see not only a bit of lane and long grass meadows, sloping down to the willow-fringed river bed; but by “slewing,” as Yankees say, his head a little to one side, could catch a glimpse of the market-place of Marshton Fallows, with the brightly lit windows of the grammar school to the left, and the towers of the minster beyond, standing up grey and majestic against the pale apple-green of the western sky, across which one long, reddish cloud, with a flame-coloured fringe on the under side, was slowly floating.

For some few minutes, Merle’s dark,

sunken eyes found theme for amusement outside; but already the green sky was fading into grey, the flame-coloured cloud had lost its brightness; and before many minutes Merle dropped back into his old position, and began to fret for tea.

"Didn't Jack know when tea would be ready?"

"No," Jack growled, without taking his chin from his hands, or his round blue eyes from the decaying embers in the grate.

"But it's so late, Jack. Don't you think we might call some one? I'll go and see—"

"You'd better!" in a menacing tone, which made Merle shrink back, and only venture a meek—

"Don't you want your tea, Jack?"

"No; I aint a greedy beast like you."

This was too much for Merle, and he burst into loud, fitful crying, in the midst of which the door opened, and an anxious, hurried-looking maid, neatly dressed, but with red rims now to her bright eyes, came in asking what was the matter, and adding a reproach for the noise. Merle ran to her, and took hold of her dress to detain her—continuing to cry, though less loudly.

"I'm so—so unhappy!" he sobbed out; "and Jack says I'm a beast. Mayn't I go away from here?"

"Well, I am surprised at you, Master Jack," said the girl, "to go quarrelling with your cousin, and to-day too! It's no wonder he's grieved, I'm sure, and his poor aunt lying dead upstairs; but 'twould be more nat'ral if you was the same. I never see a boy so unfeeling in all my born days. Master Merle, dear, don't cry so."

"But I want Enid. Won't she come to us? And mayn't we have tea?" pleaded Merle, rubbing away the tears with one hand, while he still held her with the other.

"Tea! Oh, my dears, you must wait for that, for we are all too busy to attend to you. There's nurse calling me now, and I must go. Don't hold me, Master Merle, like a good boy. Miss Enid's with her pa, I think, or I'd send her to you. If Master Jack was kindly-like, you might comfort one another. There, now!"—and in answer to a whispered call in the gallery of "Martha, Martha, where are you?" the girl detached her fingers from Merle's clutch, and, giving him a kiss, hurried away.

Thus shut in again with his misery, Merle lay down on the carpet and sobbed, while

Jack, who had never moved or looked up during the above colloquy, drew his knees closer to the grate; and so they remained, while the room grew gradually darker and darker, and the light of a solitary gas lamp at the corner of the garden wall began to flicker weirdly on the crooked maps and the time-worn bust of Homer, on the top of the bookcase.

Very, very dearly the minutes dragged on; but even the dreariest times come to an end sooner or later; and by and by the door opened again, and a little girl came in—a little girl between nine and ten years old—not pretty, and rather tall and large-boned for her age; but with peculiarly grave, sweet eyes of a bluish-grey colour, and the same sweet, steady expression in the sad, colourless little face, which bore tokens of very lately wiped away tears.

"Why, Merle," she said, setting down the chamber candle she carried on the oak table, and trying to lift the boy, who was about her own age, but looked younger by reason of his small size and delicate appearance—"don't cry so, dear, don't. It would grieve papa worse to hear you; and you wouldn't like to do that, would you?"

"Stay with us, then, Enid," said Merle, rising willingly at her touch, and putting his arm round her neck. "I'm so wretched alone, and Jack's so cross. Promise you won't go away again."

"No, Merle, I'm not going away from you again," Enid answered, soothingly; and though her manner was always gentle, it had an added element of motherly tenderness in it now which made Merle cling gratefully to her, and Jack look up for a moment from the fire. He had turned round eagerly enough when Enid first came into the room; but when he saw her devote her first attentions to Merle, a gloomy expression came over his round, freckled face, and he resumed the old moody position. Enid, however, soon glanced towards him, and coming nearer, said a little timidly—

"You've no fire here, Jack. Aren't you cold?"

"No," was the curt reply, given so grumpily that Enid shrank back again disheartened.

Merle repeated his reminder about tea, and asked Enid if she had had hers.

"No, I never thought about it; but it is late, and I dare say you want yours. Poor Merle!—wait a bit; the servants are all

busy, but I'll try and get you some from the kitchen."

"But you'll stay away, Enid?"

"No, I won't, Merle; I promise you. I shall only be a moment."

And indeed Enid was as good as her word. In a minute or two she came back again, saying the kettle would boil in a few seconds, and smiling a little to cheer Merle—who, having rather expected to see the tea arrive behind her, felt proportionately disappointed at the delay. She did not come empty-handed, however, for she brought in a small bundle of sticks with her; and, kneeling down before the fire, proceeded to coax the embers into a blaze again. Jack let her alone for a minute or two, until she seemed likely to burn her fingers in the attempt to prop a lump of refractory coal on a piece of blazing wood; and then he pushed her hand aside, and finished the work himself, soon making a cheerful glow in the dark room, and notably improving the appearance of things in general; while Enid moved softly about, putting away the scattered books and toys, straightening the chairs, carrying the basin and towels out of the room, and with every handy little movement making the room look as neat and comfortable as it had been previously the reverse.

By the time this was done, and Merle was seated in her own little straw chair in front of the fire, she slipped away again; returning almost immediately with a cup of tea quivering somewhat perilously in either hand. A good deal of the liquid had gone into the saucers, and some drops had splashed over the little girl's neat lilac frock; but, as she explained, in her soft, womanly voice—

"Cook said, if I waited ten minutes, Jane or Martha would bring up our tea. But I asked her to let me carry it; and I cut the bread and butter my own self, while she was pouring out."

Merle's face brightened into unmistakable approval at this; and still more so when she brought in next a plate containing three or four unevenly cut slices of thick bread and butter; and, setting it down on the rug between the two boys, brought Jack a stool, and asked him coaxingly to take his tea, too.

"Where's yours?" said Jack, looking over his shoulder.

"I didn't care about any, Jack. I'm not hungry."

"I aint either," said Jack, shortly; "so you'd better eat mine."

"Oh, Jack!" and Enid looked grievously disappointed, "do take some. You had no dinner, and it will do you good, I know. Besides, cook will be so vexed. She didn't like my coming in the kitchen."

"Drink it yourself, then, can't you? You've slopped it half away; so you won't have much to swallow."

Enid looked unhappy, but was afraid to disobey, Jack being more than two years her senior, and the recognized master among the three. He stood over her now surlily enough as she gulped down the tea meekly; and then pointed a stout, imperative finger at the bread and butter, apostrophizing Merle at the same time with a sharp—

"Now then, glutton, picking out the but-tery bits! I see you. Ugh!"

But here Enid made a stand.

"Let him, Jack, please. I couldn't eat—indeed, I couldn't," she said, pleadingly, and with a gathering moisture in her large grey eyes, which made Jack turn back to the fire with a grunt.

"Poor Enid!" said Merle, pulling her down to him for a kiss, before finishing the bread and butter in peace. "Don't mind him. It will be bed-time when we've done, won't it?"

"Yes, Merle; but nurse is in—mamma's room."

The little girl's lip quivered as she spoke, and Jack walked away to the window. Merle looked very unhappy.

"W—won't any one come now to hear us our prayers, and put out the candle, or anything?" he said at last, in a plaintive whisper. Enid put her hand in his.

"Yes, dear, I will," she said; and accordingly, as soon as Merle had finished his tea, she led him away to the little chamber where the two boys slept, helped the child to unbutton his tunic and collar, and herself took off his boots, before kneeling down beside him while he repeated his simple evening prayers; only when Merle, who had taken all her ministrations as quietly as if she were his attendant, came to the usual petition—"and God bless dear Aunt Mary," the little girl flung out her hands with a gasp, as if some one had struck her—"Oh, Merle! oh, Merle!"—and burst into tears. Merle stopped short, and stared at her for a moment; then, realizing the futility of the prayer just uttered, began to cry too, in a

violent, frightened fashion, which calmed Enid at once. Merle's tears were pretty sure to end in a headache, and he was her especial charge now; wherefore she dried her eyes quickly, and, having coaxed him to do the same, let the prayers go unfinished; and bade him make haste undressing, while she went and sat on the rug in the dark passage outside the door, waiting patiently till Merle's voice was heard calling—"I'm in bed, Enid;" when the little girl rose, and running in, gave him his "good night kiss," and carried the candle away.

It was nine o'clock now, and this poor young nurse's childish face looked very white and weary as she went softly back to the school-room, where Jack still sat over the fire, his elbows on his knees again, and a dirty, wet smear on either side of his averted face.

"Merle is in bed, Jack," Enid said, as he took no notice of her.

"Glad of it," growled her brother, looking up. "Why don't you go too? You look just like a lump of chalk."

"There's a strange woman talking in the nursery with nurse; and you don't want me to go away, do you, Jack?"

"I don't want you to do anything," Jack answered, carelessly; but Enid was not to be rebuffed, and kneeling down by her brother, she thrust her little hand into his arm, saying gently—

"Don't you want me to tell you about mother, Jack?"

Jack's face twitched, but he didn't push her away; only lowered his curly head till it rested on his knees, and muttered "Go on;" while, glad of even this indulgence, Enid nestled closer to him, and laid her brown head too against his knee as she said—

"It was after she sent to bid good-bye to you and Merle, before breakfast-time, you know. When you were gone she got very faint; and papa wanted to send me away, too; but she held my hand tighter, and the doctor said, I might stay. So by and by, I saw her eyes were open, and papa said, 'Enid, your mother is speaking to you;' and lifted me on to the bed, that I might hear better. She spoke so low at first I could only catch the words, 'your papa,' and then, 'Take care of Merle.' Dr. Anderson gave her some brandy, and she said again quite clearly, 'Never forget, Enid. I leave Merle to you. There

will be no one else to watch over him as I have done; and he needs it so much. Promise me to take care of him. I said, 'Yes, mother dear, I will;' and then she said, 'He is so weak, like Isabelle; and not good-tempered or winning. I fear I have spoilt him—you told me I did.' She must have been speaking to papa then, Jack; for he said, very quickly, 'Don't think of that now, Mary. I often speak hastily; and you meant it well.' Mother answered very softly, 'Yes, well; but Enid will do better. Be strong and patient, my child; only never cease to love him, nor let him go astray for want of care or tenderness.' I told her, 'I will never leave him, mother darling.' And then she said, 'God bless my little daughter.'"

Poor Enid broke down here, and sobbed bitterly, rubbing her head against Jack's. He, however, butted it away, asking, with something between a sob and a snort—

"Didn't she say *nothing* but about Merle? Nothing of me or you?"

There was a bitterness in the tone which surprised Enid; and she took to patting his leg soothingly, while she made haste to answer—

"Oh, yes, Jack. Only a minute or two later, mother said to papa, who was holding her head on his arm, you know—'I am not afraid of Jack. His strong, noble character will help him to carry himself, and Enid too, bravely through life. God bless him!'"

Jack sobbed again, but the bitterness was gone; for he uncoiled his arms from around his knees, and put one over Enid's neck, saying sturdily—

"That I will, Enid."

And Enid went on, though she was crying still—

"Papa said, 'Never fear for Jack, Mary. He's as true as steel; and, God willing, I'll keep him so.' Mother's eyes were shut; but she whispered, 'No—no fear. God bless you—all!'"

"Well, go on," cried Jack, fiercely; his face hidden still, and his voice choking.

"Oh! Jack, I can't," Enid sobbed. "The doctor lifted me off the bed, and sent me into the dressing-room; and I stayed there a long, long time. For the outer door was locked, and I was afraid to go back; till at last nurse came in, and told me to go to papa, and take him a cup of coffee. He was in his study, and wouldn't take it at first; and, oh, Jack! he looked so dreadfully

unhappy. I asked him to let me stay, and he did; though he never spoke to me all the time, till I heard some one saying outside that Merle was crying, and then I went away and came to you."

Verily, the poor little girl had been sorely tried that day; and it was Jack's turn now to comfort her, as she clung trembling and sobbing to him. But his rough fondling had its effect ere long. For when, near eleven o'clock that night, nurse bethought herself to see after "the bairns," before going to bed, two little white cots were empty still. And further search found the motherless children crouched up together, and fast asleep on the rug before the empty school-room grate; while a pale, autumn moon, peeping shyly from behind dark masses of drifting cloud, cast a wanly fitful light on the lonely little figures in the sad companionship of their first orphaned sleep.

CHAPTER II.

LAID TO REST.

"**E**ARTH to earth."

Rattle!

"Ashes to ashes."

Rattle!

"Dust to dust."

Rattle, rattle, rattle!

So the very reverend Archdeacon Hamilton, rector of St. Winifred's, scattering a handful of mould and gravel on the coffin, whose brass plate glitters out of the gloomy vault into which it has just been lowered, as if flinging back, for the last time, the name of "Mary, wife of John Leyburn."

Enid, standing close to the foot of the grave, catches sight of the first of those words; and forthwith there rises to her mind a legend, told her long ago by an old Irish nurse, of another "Mary," of old times, whose grave being visited by the disciples of her son, certain simple, soft-hearted, sadly ignorant fishermen—but those were the dark ages, remember—was found to contain, not the body of the Mother, but a bed of pure white lilies, raising their ivory petals to Heaven from the spot where the woman had lain; and the girl wonders whether, if this grave were opened a year hence, they should find lilies growing within in like manner. She does not think it at all improbable; but, not feeling quite sure on the point, thinks it will be well to make certain by planting some bulbs without delay at the

head of the tomb; thus unconsciously imitating certain religious men in all creeds, who, feeling that the images of their gods ought to possess more intelligence—or, to use a nursery phrase, "take more notice"—than the images of ordinary men, are constrained to use a little mechanical ingenuity to bestow the required powers on their insensible toys. Humble-minded creatures, content to bury their own talents for the advancement of their favourite dogmas, and mistaken as humble-minded, in that, by forcing the dogma, they injure the creed to which it pertains. Yet, after all, my dear sir, think of the fuss we make nowadays over certain scientific toys, and boast of the march of mechanical ingenuity in the nineteenth century; while three or four hundred years ago there were to be seen, in various communistic establishments, figures which winked their eyes, moved their lips and hands, and nodded their heads with all the precision of a Crystal Palace automaton!

Jack stands beside Enid, his hands tightly clasped before him, his head rather erect, and his eyes raised with a wistful, far-away look, as if he were trying to see into that distant Heaven whither his mother's spirit has so lately flown. He is not, however: no such thing. Jack loved his mother dearly; but till two minutes ago, until the rattle of the gravel on the coffin-lid brought his eyes back to earth with a start, he had been thinking of something widely different—i.e., a schoolboy's head visible through one of the upper grammar school windows!

How is this? Is the boy worse than a heathen, and utterly devoid of feeling?

Not so. He is simply acting on the natural result of that noble British custom of keeping our dead with us until a regard for our own health obliges us to bury them out of sight. In other countries, the dead are buried within twenty-four hours after the soul has departed from the body, and while the first sublime beauty of death is fresh on their marble brow; and this speedy parting causes such bitter grief to the friends and relations who cluster round this perfect image of their loved one, and cover it with flowers ere it is hurried from their sight, that they envy us our greater liberty in the matter, and think us blest in being allowed to keep the mortal remains of our departed friends with us for so long a time. Perchance they may be right, and to some this privilege may be indeed a blessing; but

to many and many another—equally warm-hearted, but not equally dowered with what I may call the “sentiment of sorrow”—it is exactly the reverse. And grief which might have been earlier healed, grief which might have been eternally hallowed by the remembrance of the pallid but exquisite majesty of those few first hours of non-existence, is rendered terrible in reality and eternally repulsive in memory, by that long week of darkness and gloom, pervaded by that stony face, changing with every hour, and darkening with the revolting shadows of mortality, until but too often it is with a feeling of painful relief that we see the coffin lid closed at last, and are left to breathe freely after the shuddering misery of those last days.

Now, in the present instance, Jack is not at all the ideal boy of romance; but a very matter-of-fact lad of flesh and blood—a boy who hates the thought of death or decay, hates books, hates tears and trouble, hates above all being shut up indoors, debarred from air and sunshine; and who, for eight long days, has been pent within a close, darkened house, with nothing to see but melancholy faces on all sides, nothing to occupy him but his books, and nothing to arouse him but teasing the cat and wandering aimlessly about the house, with an ever-pervading sense of *that* room, where the still white figure lies all day and all night, and where he has never ventured to enter save for one semi-compulsory visit.

Enid steals in and out often—sometimes alone, sometimes with Merle; and the latter has crept in once by himself, and stood gazing eagerly at the altered features of his dead aunt, till at last a sudden horror came over him, and, afraid to move, he burst into such shrill, wild cries that Mr. Leyburn, Aunt Jane, nurse, and Enid all rushed in at once; and the culprit was carried off, and given six verses in the Bible to learn by Aunt Jane, as a punishment for his “indecent conduct.” But after that, *the* room has been kept locked; and Jack has not been sorry thereat. Nay, now that he is out in the sweet, clear sunshine, with a gentle breeze stirring the autumnal red and gold of the plane trees, and rumpling the long green grass about his feet, with the grey walls of the old minster looking calmly down on him from one side, and the grammar school windows on the other, peering over the wall

which separates its noisy, echoing yard from the quietude of the minster close—as people call that sacred square of ground wherein it is the privilege of certain of the oldest families round about to be buried—he feels, unhappy though he be, as though a heavy load had been lifted from his heart; and in spite of the solemnity of the service, his eyes will wander, first to the red tip of Aunt Jane’s nose, gleaming vividly among the folds of a huge black-bordered handkerchief; then to a loose stone in the wall, which he thinks might be useful for escalating feats; and lastly, to the grammar school, where they rest curiously. It is history day, Jack recollects; and history is just the *one* subject in which he is not backward. He feels half angry now, as he remembers that he has lost a week through no fault of his own, and will probably be more behindhand than ever this half; and he is inclined to regard his schoolmates resentfully because they have not also struck work in compliment to his enforced idleness. Yet, when in the very act of thus thinking, a boy’s face appears peeping furtively from the school-room window—to which by right his back should be turned. Jack’s virtuous indignation rises immediately, and forgetting that he has been condemning the rest of the school for idleness, he feels quite inclined to go right in and punch that boy’s head for his impertinent curiosity.

“Idle young cur!” thinks Jack. “Poking his nose into other people’s affairs;” and then feels furious with himself, because those solemn words of “Dust to dust” recall him to a sense of his own forgetfulness.

Merle is crying the whole time. Indeed, the front of his black tunic is quite wet and smeared with tears, as he clings to Enid’s hand; and Aunt Jane regards him approvingly for once, although he is by no means a favourite of hers; and she frequently observes that she “cannot see rhyme or reason for Mrs. John’s fancy of foisting the expense of another child on her brother’s household.”

“So the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Ghost, be with us all evermore.”

Archdeacon Hamilton had done at last; and the little funeral party was filing slowly out of the gateway, Mr. Leyburn with his sister first, and the children following, when a boy, who had been standing quietly in the back-ground throughout the service, made a sort

of dart forward, and catching Jack's hand, said, impulsively—

"Jack, I'm so awfully sorry;" after which he darted away again, and was seen no more.

"I didn't know Clifton was here. How good of him!" whispered Enid, softly.

Jack reddened with indignation.

"He'd no business here," he retorted. "He wasn't asked. *She*"—Jack never used his mother's name now—said 'only one or two intimate friends,' and named them. *He* wasn't one;" and Jack rubbed his offended hand against the leg of his trousers, and muttered something about "pushing;" for all which, I am bound to say that he felt more cheered and comforted by his friend's hasty word of sympathy than by any other event that had occurred since his mother's death. An additional enlivenment was finding all the blinds up on their return, and the sunshine streaming in on the deserted rooms, and making Enid's canary, which had been silent throughout the week, burst into a peal of jubilant song, which filled the whole house.

Such song! It thrilled and twirled and rippled, rushed upstairs like a fountain of melody into the *silent* room above, flowed back in sweet, short gushes of melody on the black and white tiled hall below; and set all the thrushes and linnets in the garden outside chirruping like mad for emulation.

The effect of this peal of triumphant music on the several members of the bereaved family was widely different.

Mr. Leyburn started, put his hand to his head as though in pain, and walked straight into his study, shutting the door sharply behind him.

Aunt Jane looked up in disapproving astonishment, and whispered to the maid who had admitted them—

"Cover up that bird's cage at once, Jane. Most indecorous, such noise on the very day of the funeral."

Enid thought—

"Dear birdie! how fond mamma was of him. I must ask nurse to give me a lump of sugar for him to-day;" and her great eyes filled with tender tears.

Merle thought—

"Now, I wonder whether birdie's singing so loud to-day because Aunt Mary has gone up to Heaven, instead of lying on the bed with her eyes shut, and that dreadful cloth under her chin."

He forgot, you see, that Aunt Mary's soul was as much in Heaven while her body, made dreadful by our hideous formulas of death, was lying on the bed, as now, when the priest had committed it to the grave. But children's minds are not, as a rule, given to reflecting on subjects which do not come within the immediate range of their senses.

Jack didn't think anything—anything which could be put into words, at least; but that glorious outgush of song seemed to wake him from a bad dream. A vague impression came over his mind that some dreadful cloud, which had been hanging over the house, had suddenly melted away, leaving all clear and bright as it had been before. The frowning look faded from his face; he tossed his cap on the hall table, and was already springing upstairs with an incipient whistle on his lips, and an incipient idea in his mind of "looking for mother," when Aunt Jane caught him by a little piece of his arm, and a look of horror which effectually recalled him to himself.

"*Whistling*, Jack, when your mother is hardly laid in her grave! I did not think you so heartless. For shame!"

Jack hung his head, not at his aunt's words, but at his own forgetfulness. Seeing, however, that Miss Leyburn was about to "improve the occasion" with one of those wearying, never-ending lectures in which elderly spinsters do so greatly delight, and which utterly nullify the effect of their best-meant precepts, he wrenched his arm out of her grasp, and muttered, angrily—

"Let me go, Aunt Jane, will you? You needn't begin scolding me if I did whistle a bit."

"*Scold* you, Jack!" said Miss Leyburn, severely. "I am sorry, indeed, you should speak in such a tone, and to-day! Have you no heart, no *propriety*, that you can't even pretend to care for your mother?"

Jack faced round on her, guarding himself with one arm, as he blurted out—

"I hate propriety, and I hate pretending—women's humbugs, both of 'em—and I loved my mother a deal better than you ever did; and you've no right to nip me if I didn't."

"No right to what, you bad, bad boy?" asked Aunt Jane, her very crape stiffening with righteous indignation.

"Jack, dear!" Enid remonstrated, timidly, from the bottom of the stairs.

But at this moment a third person appeared

on the scene—Mr. Leyburn. Though carried on in angry whispers, the sound of dispute had penetrated the study; and now a tall figure appeared in the doorway, asking, in grave tones of annoyance—

"What is all this discussion? Cannot there be peace here for even one day?"

His look took in Miss Leyburn and Jack equally; but the former, sure of her ground, answered, promptly—

"I grieve indeed, John, that you should be disturbed; but Jack's insolent and unfeeling conduct——"

Jack flung past her, and stood in the hall, looking up in Mr. Leyburn's face confidently.

"You know I wasn't unfeeling, father," he said, with a quiet certainty of being understood here; "and I only told her she had no right to nip me. She hasn't, you know" (explanatorily), "and that isn't insolent, is it?"

Mr. Leyburn looked pale and worried; but Jack was his favourite, and he answered less angrily than he had intended.

"I thought that you were too manly to mind being hurt, Jack; not that your aunt meant to hurt you, I'm sure."

Great deprecation from Aunt Jane; great mortification from Jack. *He* mind being hurt!

"I really must have quiet and order among you children. Your aunt has come here very kindly"—Miss Leyburn smiled graciously—"to superintend my house and take care of you children for a time—in fact, till I find some lady suited to the post; and you are to be docile and obedient to her as"—with a sigh—"you were to your dear mother. Now, remember what I have said. Enid, why don't *you* keep the boys quiet?"

Bang went the door again; and he was gone, without waiting to be answered, and leaving a flushed and uncomfortable group behind him. Aunt Jane was, of course, the one to recover speech first.

"Now, children," she said, fussing up to them, with a laudable desire to assert her dignity without further delay, "go upstairs and take off your things quietly, and then come down to me, and I will read you a short, improving chapter; and I think"—with an eye especially on Jack—"that it would be a nice suitable occupation for the day, and calming to your minds, if you were each to learn a short psalm afterwards."

There was no reply. The three children

trooped upstairs with the cheerful submission of sheep goaded to slaughter by the sheep-dog snapping at their heels: Jack disdaining to offer further resistance by word or act, because "father said he wanted peace;" Enid's gentle little heart swelling with a vain longing for the tender mother whose very presence was peace, and a sorrowful feeling that she must have been to blame somehow, or father wouldn't have spoken so to her; and Merle clinging close to her side, and shrinking out of sight of Miss Leyburn—that lady being the object of his special terror and dislike.

Poor little motherless trio. And even the canary had left off singing—Jane, obedient to orders, having covered him up with a dark cloth, and stopped the cheering sound of his jubilant notes from going forth on their mission of joy and comfort.

Verily, it takes very little to make discord in a happy home. A woman's death breedeth tears, a woman's tongue breedeth wrath; and in such as Aunt Jane the latter never ceaseth until the former be come. Peradventure they do not feel, under the heavy grave clouds, that the ceaseless wagging of that unruly member has driven away all heart from those around them by the time Death lays his icy finger on the restless lips, and says, "Be still!"

It was evening of the same day. The improving chapter had been read, and the psalms said. Mr. and Miss Leyburn were partaking of their sad six o'clock dinner downstairs; and the children were in the school-room, tea over, and the unhappy look still dark on each little face.

"Shall I get out your books, Jack?" asked Enid, trying to speak cheerfully; for the boys were to go to school on the morrow, and it was their custom to prepare lessons on the evening before.

"No; what's the use?" replied Jack, drearily. "I don't know where we are, or anything. Those fellows"—in an angry tone—"will have gone on miles ahead, of course."

"I have learnt some of mine every day," said Merle, "and my head aches too much now to go over them; but I think, Enid, if you'd read the Latin aloud to me, and ask me questions here and there, I should like that."

"More than Enid would, I expect," said Jack. "Well, when I was your age, I'd have been ashamed to let a girl teach me."

"I suppose that was why you didn't learn," replied Merle, rather pertly, from his safe corner by Enid.

Jack half rose, with an angry face; but recollected that "father wanted peace," and sat down and swallowed his wrath.

"Merle," said his little guardian, gravely, "you are very rude to Jack; and I don't think mother would have let me help you at all to-night if she had heard you."

Merle was just beginning a vehement disclaimer of this opinion; but before the words were uttered, the attention of all three children was attracted by something new—a couple of sharp raps on the window!

"What's that?" they all cried out together.

"A robber," said Enid, getting up as if to go forward.

"A ghost!" cried Merle, shrinking back.

"The wind," said Jack, without moving.

But all three were in the wrong; for now a human voice, muffled by the glass, was heard speaking in tones which sounded familiar, and the voice said—

"Let me in."

EXTRACT OF POPPIES.

INTRODUCTION.

[THE "Robert" to whom this journal is addressed, have been asked to add a few explanatory sentences. I was the cousin of the writer, and his most intimate friend. He was an orphan brought up in my father's house; and as we were nearly of an age, and I was an only son, we were like brothers. Yet we had very little in common: I was a worldling—he, a mystic. When we grew up, I settled in Liverpool, and became absorbed in active business; while he isolated himself very much from his fellow-creatures, caring only for the society of books. He early devoted himself to deep studies, his researches finally becoming principally directed towards magic, and the barren lore of the Rosicrucians, about which he would talk with passionate eagerness on the occasions when he stayed with me. The only modern subject in which he appeared to take any interest was spiritualism, my scepticism concerning which he certainly shook for a time. I fear, however, that in this and other cognate subjects, I professed to be a better believer than I really was; for when questions of no earthly practical importance are discussed, I like

to give my common sense a holiday, and allow imagination to take its swing. On the occasion of my cousin's last visit, however, I was concerned to notice a degree of mental excitement which was new to him, and I discovered that he had contracted an unfortunate habit which was undermining his constitution. Opium, taken in the first instance as a medicine, had become necessary to him. When he left me, I persuaded him to see a London physician in whom I had every reason to place great confidence, and I extracted a promise that he would write and let me know how he was going on. He did not keep that promise exactly, though the journal, which extends over a space of four months, shows that he intended to do so; and I confess that for some time his existence faded out of my memory, so utterly absorbed was I by business at a period of crises, when I was vacillating between ruin and fortune.

This is the Journal.

"London.

"MY DEAR ROBERT—I retract my promise to write letters to you after the ordinary fashion of correspondence; it is such an effort to me to look back for days and weeks, and recall sufficient to make up four respectable sides of a sheet of paper. And when my day's work is done, I want repose. But I will keep a diary if you like, for I find it no labour, but on the contrary a relief, a rest, to write down what I have been doing and planning but a few hours before. That is no strain upon the memory, but refreshes me, like a quiet chat. So that I have been in the habit for some years of keeping memoranda in a pocket-book. This journal I will send you from time to time.

"I went to Doctor Tate yesterday, as you wished, and he told me pretty much what you would have said, or what I could have told myself. I paid him for the information that I am overworked, and that opium is an unwholesome drug. His advice was to go out of town; to vegetate for some months in perfect idleness, and gradually to reduce my doses. Well, when I am able to knock off work, I will also try to exist without opium, in spite of the horrors in store for me, according to De Quincey; though, as I have never taken it to anything like the extent he did, I hope to come off easier. But when shall I be able to take a

complete holiday? I have, indeed, at last collected all my materials: my notes would fill five quarto volumes, and I had to master four new languages and seven dialects in the research. But to digest this mass, to arrange it all in a consecutive, intelligible form, will require much labour, time, and skill. With my failing health, I may not accomplish it myself, but I hope to advance far enough for others to take up the work where I have dropped it; for though I trust to assist somewhat, after that change which we call death, it is impossible, in the present defective state of spiritual communication, to put much confidence in the amount of influence I shall be able to exert. Ah, my book, when published, will do more to establish—or may we not rather say, to restore?—that communication than any European work ever penned. What a loss to humanity, what an eternal disappointment to myself, were it never to see the light! I dreaded that calamity two years ago, when my memory and power of clear thought failed me so suddenly and terribly. It was in despair that I tried the remedy of opium, for I had a horror of the drug. But how magical were its effects! My nerves lost that gnawing restlessness which had distressed me so sorely; my mind regained its former powers—nay, it acquired a fresh vigour. It is a better physician than you, Doctor Tate; and if I have to pay it a higher fee, that is only fair.

"I will follow the good doctor's advice in one respect, however—that of going out of town. The complete state my notes are in enables me to do this comfortably. I am at last independent of books and libraries, and can work, like the silkworm, without external aid. And glad am I to escape from the perpetual din and roar and hum which are tearing my nerves to pieces. I settled at once where to go to. In passing through Bala, in Wales, by coach, some years ago, I took a great fancy to the pretty little place, and shall start for it to-morrow."

"Waiting-room, Railway Junction.

"I wish I could get some man of real genius to write the first chapter of my work, and impress people with a sense of its seriousness. If they would but give it fair attention in the first instance, I do not doubt of its effect. But the age is so impregnated with materialism, that any one who speaks with gravity of matters outside

the routine of everyday experience is looked upon, without inquiry, as an impostor or a madman. I suppose that there are hardly twenty people in England who would credit the existence of those demi-demons called ghouls and vampires, for example; and yet the mass of evidence which I have accumulated from the records of all countries in all ages, during the last two years that I have devoted to that branch of my subject, would convince any one who weighed it carefully and impartially. If all those well-attested cases are myths, there is no dependence to be placed on human testimony whatever: Julius Cæsar was a myth; Louis XIV. was a myth; the French Revolution was a sensational story got up by a literary clique for book-making purposes."

"Bala.

"Doctor Tate suspected aphasia. I am sure of it, from his questions; but there is no loss of memory. This place is exactly as I expected to see it: mountains, lake, streams, and even the houses of the village, were impressed with such marvellous accuracy on my brain. Yet I only remained here the time to change horses, and that many years ago. Why this strong impression? When I came within sight of Bala yesterday, the same feeling came over me which I remember to have experienced on the first occasion. I was stirred as a returning Swiss emigrant is on visiting the valley where he spent his childhood; or as the man is who has loved and lost, when he stands once again in the old trysting-place. Can it be that my destiny is in some way bound up with this Welsh village? Shall I take it as a happy omen that my work will be brought to a successful conclusion here? Or is it my evil angel, and not my good, who draws me to the spot where I am to meet my fate?

"To remain at the inn more than one night was out of the question in the state of my nerves. I had no difficulty in getting a lodging which suited me: a cottage, thatch-roofed, the walls overgrown with jessamine, honeysuckle, and roses to such an extent that the casements have to be constantly cleared with the pruning-knife; in short, the house has its hair cut periodically. It stands in a small garden, about half a mile from the little town, and the front windows command a pretty view of the lake. My landlady is old and very

deaf, but not past her work, in which she is assisted by another woman, also elderly, and very stupid-looking. She may be a daughter, or a younger sister, or merely a servant; I cannot say. They do what is necessary, without fuss; never want to chat; never come near me unless I send for them; and seem to understand that it is quite a matter of course that they are never to touch my papers, though the dust lie an inch thick upon them. I believe that they have escaped the female mania for dusting. We three and a fine tom cat are the sole inhabitants of the house. The tom cat is friendly: he admires my habits. You know that I never have any regular meals, and make no distinction between day and night. I think he considers all this feline and sensible. His mistress takes everything as a matter of course.

"I wonder where they got their furniture. It is very old, and some of it of very considerable value, to be in the possession of a woman who lets her house and lives in the kitchen: high-backed ebony chairs, an oak table, a cabinet—all so wonderfully carved as to be more fitted for the Cluny Museum at Paris than a Welsh cottage. The upper part of the cabinet consists of folding doors. I shall try them; and if they are unfastened and the cabinet is empty, I shall keep the bulk of my MSS. there. A fitting receptacle, considering the character of my researches. The piece of furniture is seven hundred years old at least, and may probably have belonged to one of those philosophers of the Middle Ages whose discoveries were lost to mankind—lost, stifled by an ambitious clergy, jealous of any power which might overthrow their own."

"Ba'a.

"I have not been able to open the doors of the upper part of the cabinet, but to-day they unfolded themselves, as if by a spell. The under part opens easily enough, and is fitted with shelves, upon which I was arranging the few books, not above twenty volumes in all, which I have had to bring with me. As some of these, however, are folios, I had to rearrange the shelves to get depth to receive them; and in so doing I suppose I touched some secret spring, for, when I rose to my feet, I found that the doors which had baffled me were wide open, disclosing an object which produced the most extraordi-

nary fascination upon me that I have ever experienced. It looks the extreme of bathos to write down what, after awhile, I discovered it to be—a teapot! Only a teapot; but certainly the most wonderful work of art that ever was modelled in clay—if indeed it is a work of art merely that possesses this magnetic power. Yet in all ages men have made gods, or rather demons, and then worshipped them—demons of yet more homely and ludicrous form than that of a teapot; and it is rejecting the experience of millions of our fellow-creatures to conclude that none of these idols have been able to exercise influence for good or ill.

"It is not upon me alone that this strong piece of china exercises a powerful influence. The apathetic woman who brought me food awhile ago, stood petrified with horror when she saw it. I questioned her. She never knew of its existence—had never seen the doors of the cabinet open before. She had been the housekeeper of an old gentleman, a recluse, who had lived in the cottage; and when he died he left it her, with the furniture as it stood.

"The effect upon her was that of dread; upon me it is—indescribable; but certainly the reverse of anything like repugnance.

"This dream in china is partly woman, partly snake. The spout is formed by the head and neck of a serpent—deadly-eyed, sluggish, poison-fanged; and the folds of the writhing reptile twist themselves into a handle. The most exquisite female bust is discernible in the bowl, the pure transparent whiteness brought into relief by the brown scales which half clothe it. From this rise, as lid, the neck and head of a woman whose beauty surpasses everything which my imagination ever dreamed of. It is awful. If there ever lived a woman like that, I do not believe that any man, however virtuous, would have resisted her commands.

"There is a Sphinx-like mystery about the brow and eyes, which tells of depths that no human intellect could fathom. There is no possible pity, repentance, or relenting in the cruel features—cruel with the cruelty of fate, not of caprice. Those lips breathe an unutterable sensuality, eternal, incapable of satiety."

"Bala.

"I have not kept my journal so regularly as I intended; and perhaps, Robert, the last lines I jotted down will be all you will

receive: whether I allow what I am now writing to remain undestroyed, is doubtful. If it were ever to reach the public eye, it would annihilate all faith in my judgment and credibility, and would cause my magnum opus to be looked upon as a gigantic mystification. I even doubt the effect upon you, Robert, though you have conquered the scepticism of the age; though you *know*—not believe, but *know* that there is a spirit world in communication with the material. For there is something so incongruous, so absurd in my position, that if it were true that ridicule is the test of truth, my theories would not deserve consideration for a moment. It sounds broader than farce, it would be sheer burlesque in most ears for me to say—“I, who pretend to lead mankind back to the paths tending towards the highest philosophy, from which all thinkers have for centuries diverged, am under the thralldom of a teapot!”

“Yet we, the initiated, know well enough that beings of subtle essence do constantly and habitually infuse themselves into the most homely articles. But that is not quite a case in point either, for a conviction has grown upon me that the female face now gazing down upon me is not merely an inanimate object temporarily inhabited by a spirit. It is a being itself. A magnetic influence belongs to it which fascinates and enthralms me. I sit for days and nights before my papers—but I cannot work; I gaze and gaze, and yield to the influence. I lose sense of my corporeal existence, and become absorbed. I am only able to write this because I have wandered from the room and the house, and am out on the mountain side. But I see that face everywhere. I could not fly from it if I wished. But I have no such desire. It looks down upon me from the clouds; it is reflected in the lake; it passes across the vistas of the wood.

“Has it, think you, ever been granted to such a one, devoted to the service of a female demon, in the still watches of the night, when alone in the temple, to see speculation dawn in the moonlit eyes of his idol, movement agitate her limbs? Why does this thought excite a fearful fascination in my mind, causing my knees to shake, my breath to fail, and a cold sweat to break out upon my forehead?”

“Bala.

“Yes, Robert, I will send what I have

written, and what I am now writing; and for this reason, that haply it may be the last news you will hear of me. For I am going to undertake a great risk, knowingly, and with my eyes open. I possess a spell, acquired at great cost of research, whereby those creatures of an intermediate order, forming the link between man and spirit (as the monkey does between man and beast, the bat between beast and bird, the sea-anemone between animal and vegetable), can be forced to quit any transmigration that may hold them, and assume their original form. I can bear this suspense no longer. I shall use it. . . .”

This strange journal, which was written in a large-sized metallic diary, ended here. It came to me by the post one morning, and alarmed me seriously; causing me at the same time a feeling of bitter self-reproach for having, in the press of anxious business, forgotten entirely about the poor fellow. I now sought to atone for the neglect by starting at once for Bala, writing most urgently to Doctor Tate to meet me there. I found my cousin very ill indeed. The woman of the house where he lodged had discovered him lying in a swoon on the floor of his sitting-room, and had got him to bed. He was still unconscious, and remained so until the arrival of Doctor Tate, whose efforts to bring back his senses were after a while effectual.

I was sitting by his head, rather behind the curtain, thinking that he slept, when he first spoke coherently.

“You got my journal?” he said, in a weak but clear tone.

“Yes,” I replied, rising, and bending over him.

“I have raised the fiend,” he said, “but I cannot lay it. Nay, let me tell you,” for I tried at first to silence him. “I want to speak of it. I came home in the evening—in the dusk. I could distinguish everything, though not quite clearly. It was gone from the cabinet! Yet I felt its presence. I looked round the room, and in a large, deep chair I saw a shadowy form. I approached, and saw that face which is graven on my heart and brain, the eyes darting floods of magnetic fluid into mine. I sprang forward in rapture, and sought to kiss her; but her lips, avoiding mine, glided down to my throat, and fixed there; and at the same time serpent coils swelled from the chair,

and enveloped me in their folds, as she sucked my life-blood from my veins. When they were dry, she left me. How am I alive without blood? That is magic. She will come again, and finding no blood, will suck my life out."

He sank back on the pillow, and closed his eyes. Doctor Tate, who had come forward when he began to speak, protruded his under-lip, and slightly shrugged his shoulders. I followed him out of the room.

"He will not be here long," said he.

At two o'clock that night the patient once more started from his lethargy, and sitting up, gazed with parted lips, and eyes that started from their sockets, upon vacancy.

"She comes! she comes! I feel the slimy folds—I feel the moist warm lips!"

He fell back in convulsions, violent at first, then gradually calmer. When all was quiet, and I attempted to administer the stimulant which had been ordered in the event, I found that the soul had passed.

THE ABDUCTION OF THE O'BANAGHER.

CHAPTER I.

THE O'Banaghers were originally Kings of Ireland. Whether they reigned over the entire island, or whether their sway extended merely to a portion of the province of Munster, remains to this day an open question. In "Keating's General History of Ireland"—a charming work, which carries the reader back to periods anterior to the Flood—there is no mention of the family as having at any time enjoyed sovereign power. The testimony of oral tradition, however—upon which to a great extent the existence of the ancient gods rests—is very strong, if not explicit, in favour of the claims of The O'Banagher. And it is by no means surprising that persons whose ancestry dates beyond that of Jupiter himself should appeal to the same class of evidence as that upon which are based the pretensions of the once popular heathen divinity.

When—owing first of all to deplorable family disputes of an exciting character, but too numerous to relate, and last of all to deplorable foreign invasions, the history of which we have all read—the crown and sceptre of The O'Ban-Na-Gers (for so the members of this royal family were styled

in the original, the words signifying "the potent rulers of a mighty people") were abolished, the ex-kings were still regarded by their affectionate subjects as natural leaders and heaven-appointed chiefs. "The Emerald Gem of the Western world" had, it is true, been "set in the crown of a stranger," but confiscation of territory does not necessarily imply alienation of love; and although the temporal power of The O'Banaghers had become considerably diminished, the representatives of the house continued to reign in the hearts of a devoted people, who looked up to them with that beautiful natural allegiance so characteristic of "the foinest pisantry in the wurld."

It is a sad thing to contemplate the decline and fall of empires; and the least sensitive visitor to the curtailed inheritance of this race of Hibernian sovereigns must feel a little of what the late Mr. Gibbon experienced as he sat musing amid the ruins of the Capitol at Rome. "The O'Banagher Estates"—as they are airily described by the tenantry round about—consist of about thirty acres of land, in the centre of which stands Castle Banagher, a large and dismal mansion occupying the very site upon which the royal residence once stood.

The present monarch was at the date of this story the representative in Imperial Parliament of Ballymarun, near to which town his property was situated. He held the seat with the approval of Mr. Murphy, the editor of the *Ballymarun Eagle*. The O'Banagher was a little man. He did not exceed five feet by more than half an inch. His round head was becoming bald, but what hair he had was exceedingly brilliant. His whiskers were even ruddier in hue than the hair that encircled his head; though a few grey locks sprinkled on both head and face told, with other signs, of a man rapidly approaching his fiftieth year. A decided squint in his left eye diminished rather than increased the natural dignity of his appearance; and his corpulent little person betokened good living, with a healthy enjoyment of the same.

It was a fine frosty morning—the month of March was but a few days old—and The O'Banagher, arrayed in the gay uniform of the Ballymarun Hunt, sat over his bachelor breakfast attended by his faithful domestic, Larry—a good-natured creature, of preposterous height, who discharged a variety of

functions, ordinary and confidential, in Castle Banagher. The room in which The O'Banagher breakfasted overlooked a not very well-kept lawn. On the walls hung a number of portraits of ancient monarchs in long white beards and wonderful gowns. Some of them carried sceptres, while others were without that badge of office. The paintings were all modern—being, indeed, the work of a Cork artist—but the subjects were all of considerable antiquity, the frame of the most venerable bearing an inscription that the gentleman depicted had died in the year 3045 B.C., at the advanced age of 253, deeply regretted by a large and sorrowing circle of acquaintances.

Fin MacCool, the name which The O'Banagher had patriotically bestowed upon his favourite horse, was impatiently pawing the ground in front of the house. The O'Banagher had finished his breakfast; Larry was filling the honourable member's flask with sherry; everything was in readiness for his departure. The time had arrived when he should think of starting for the "meet." At that important moment, who should arrive on the scene but Mr. Murphy, in a great perspiration, demanding to see the master of the house. He made his bow, and blurted out, in a series of pants—

"I want to spake wid ye, O'Banagher—privately."

"Great heavens! I'm just on my way out. I can't, really. Won't some other time do?"

"No, begorra, it's a matther of life an' death; but I won't keep you more than tin minutes."

The unfortunate man groaned, looked out piteously at Fin MacCool; but he could not afford to offend his most influential supporter, so he led the way into the study. Now what took place at that interview has never transpired; whether they were actually important matters of State which demanded immediate attention, or concerns of a private nature which called for settlement, or some divulgement of threatened danger, or some miserable question about the paving of Ballymarun, can never be known. One thing, however, is quite certain—namely, that the interview lasted exactly forty-five minutes, and when The O'Banagher shook hands with Murphy at the door, his little face was quite red with excitement. Whether that was attributable to the nature of Murphy's disclosures or to the length of them, whether it betokened fear or fury, must remain always

a secret. As Murphy strode down the lawn, The O'Banagher, in the hearing of Larry and the groom, indulged in a series of expressions which were anything but parliamentary.

Fin MacCool gave a snort of relief as his master mounted and rode off. The member's mind was full of conflicting emotions, but was chiefly engaged in anticipating a meeting with a certain Miss Mulligan, who had engaged his royal attention at the last hunt ball. He had not gazed upon her since that festive occasion—at least, not with the bodily eye, though daily and nightly his mental gaze was sustained by cheerful visions of her face. He had secretly determined that he would embrace the opportunity which this day offered of distinguishing himself in the field. He would prove to her by doughty deeds that his physical gifts were by no means inferior to his mental endowments. A vision of Miss Mulligan immersed in the billows of Aughcloyne brook, and of himself dashing wildly into the surging stream and triumphantly rescuing her from imminent death, had several times presented itself to his kindly imagination as a delicious possibility; or her horse might take fright suddenly, and rush with headlong speed across a dangerous country; then, with super-equine strides, should Fin MacCool nobly o'ertake the lesser steed, and his rider bravely save a precious life. These dreams were somewhat blurred as The O'Banagher pressed forward towards the meet at Knox's Corner.

He made Fin MacCool do wonders in that short distance. Cottages, hedges, stone-breakers, geese, children, sped past him as he had never seen them speed before, except when sitting behind a locomotive. But, alas! for the futility of human wishes—the vanity of even the most inspiring emanations of the brain; when he arrived at Knox's Corner, the whole party had ridden off, except somebody or other's servant, who sat on a pony, surveying the horizon. This menial, observing a belated member of the Ballymarun Hunt, addressed him in condoling accents.

"Och! sor, what kep ye at all, at all?"

"Where are they gone, man?" inquired The O'Banagher, evincing a not unnatural impatience.

"Why, sure they rode off half an hour ago. They're goin' to dhraw Ballyhooley Slope, and it's a divil av a hurry they were in intirely."

"Any ladies present?" asked The O'Banagher, placing his eye-glass in his eye.

"Only Miss Mulligan, sor, an' she looked grand. May I niver stir out av this, if she didn't look a pictur!"

"Shut up, and be hanged to you!" replied the member, with unnecessary energy. "You say they went to Ballyhooley Slope?"

"Divil a place else, sor. It's meself believes that O'Connor the huntsman has a fox shut up in a box there, to let him out whin he hears the 'Tally-ho!' he talks so confident about findin' wan."

"Mind your own business, sir. I dare say I'll overtake them."

"Well, yer honour, av *you* don't do it, there's not another in the country can, an' so I'm a tellin' ye."

"Get out, you villain!" replied The O'Banagher, greatly pleased notwithstanding.

So the proprietor of Castle Banagher and somebody or other's servant parted, the latter seated on an animal which he could with ease have lifted from the ground, the former perched on the gigantic back of the renowned Fin MacCool. Crashing through a thin hedge into the adjoining meadow, The O'Banagher was soon speeding towards Ballyhooley. It was a splendid morning: just enough of frost in the air to give a stimulus to the blood. The atmosphere was thin and bright. One could see for miles and miles on all sides, and every sound sent forth—the talk of labourers four fields off, the bark of a dog in a farmyard, the crowing of cocks, and even the "grunt, grunt" of the proverbial pig—was conveyed to the ear with strange distinctness. But there was no sound of the music of the hunt, no echo of the dogs' chorus; although the impatient rider, having done his three miles in an incredibly short space of time, was now nearing Ballyhooley Slope.

When he arrived at the spot all was as desolate as a graveyard. There was neither sign nor sound to indicate the neighbourhood of his brethren of the chase. The O'Banagher drew up by a stiff covert, and indulged in a whole volley of expletives. Attracted by this burst of blasphemy, a rustic who was doing something with a spade at the other side of the thicket, shyly approached, and gazed with awe upon the glorious apparition. Really The O'Banagher didn't look badly in his uniform—at least, when mounted, and was calculated, notwith-

standing his diminutive stature, to create astonishment in the bosom of the simple labourer. The voice from the summit of Fin MacCool put the stereotyped question to the admiring native—

"Had he seen the hunt go by?"

"Och, divil a hunt, yer honour. But there was little Jemmy Donovan, sor, I heerd him say that a fox broke cover down by Dennis's barn, and that he heerd the 'Tally-ho!' himself, and seen the redcoats, sor."

"And where the deuce is this barn you talk about?"

"Is it Dennis's barn, sor? Why, it's beyant the hill there, sor; now it's as straight as ever ye can go, sor."

"And how far?"

"Well, now, it might be five miles be the road—more or less, you know, sor—an' maybe three or four, or thereabouts, av ye crass ould Croly's farm."

"Then I *will* cross old Croly's farm. Out of the way, there."

So saying, he pitched a coin to the man with the spade, and was soon plunging through "ould" Croly's favourite turnip field. The ingenious labourer had certainly understated the distance of Dennis's barn, when he put it at three or four miles. When The O'Banagher reached the other side of the hill, and came in sight of the institution described to him, he looked round in blank astonishment, for not only was there no trace of his companions in arms, but he was gazing round a part of the country which, though it looked eminently suited for a good run, was by no means familiar to him. He pulled up by the side of a brook that babbled down the hill, put his glass in his eye, but descried no well-known feature—

"Within the Land debatable."

He took his sherry flask out of his pocket, and filled the glittering silver drinking cup. He indulged in a long and steady pull at the contents. He then addressed to the attentive shrubs a number of observations, more or less uncomplimentary, concerning the peasant with the spade who had so obligingly misdirected him.

It was a pleasant country, nicely undulating. Thick plantations surrounded the meadows and skirted the boreens. The roofs of cabins peeped here and there from behind ditches. Harrows lay beside iron gates—never padlocked. A dull crow was skimming along the hard surface of the

ground in expectation of a worm; and, disappointed, uttered lugubriously the "caws" of disappointment. But The O'Banagher was blind to the beauties of beneficent nature, and scanning the horizon with his eye-glass, swore quietly to himself. Suddenly the glass dropped from his eye. He stretched forward. Fin MacCool pricked his ears. Was not that the baying of the pack? Yes, surely! Thrice-blessed zephyrs, coming his way, were laden with a cheerful message. The rustic had not been mendacious, after all. The hunt was at hand. Assuring himself of the direction of the sound, the doughty horseman dashed forward once more.

If he rode hard before, you may imagine how he rode now. Fin MacCool's legs stretched out before and behind as though they never touched the ground, and their proprietor were flying. The O'Banagher, encased in mud—for he had traversed an occasional bog—bobbed up and down on the summit of the horse, his little coat-tails and his eye-glass flying out straight behind him. He did several miles in this mad manner, taking everything before him—brooks, hedges, stone walls. He nearly took a haystack; but Fin MacCool shirked it, and, galloping round, landed his master right in the middle of a farmyard, to the great surprise of a rabble rout of pigs and poultry. The occupants of the farmhouse and the people from the yard came forward, and, forming a circle round horse and rider, commenced scratching their heads and grinning. The O'Banagher was out of breath, and couldn't utter a syllable. At last one of the men ventured an observation—

"Foine day, sor," says he.

"Ay, glory be to God," says another, emboldened by the courageous example of his brother-agriculturist. "Sure, it's splendid weather that's in it."

The O'Banagher having by this time regained his breath, put to them the customary inquiry. But they had heard nothing of the hunt, nor seen any one belonging to it. Perhaps they were at the plantation, a mile farther off on the main road. That was a great place for foxes—a great place entirely. Had heard strange noises in that direction, now they thought of it. The unfortunate senator, who, in the simplicity of his heart, habitually believed the statements of his fellow-creatures, immediately argued—

"The sound that I heard, and the sound

heard by these intelligent peasants, must have been one and the same sound. I'll just ride in that direction."

A deputation of intelligent peasants conducted him through a breen into the road, pointed out the direction of the plantation, and the undaunted sportsman pressed forward once again. He reached the plantation, and found—nothing.

He had had a hard morning's work. He consulted his watch, and found to his horror that it was three o'clock. He looked round the landscape, and discovered to his horror that he hadn't the remotest idea as to where he was. Utterly jaded, disgusted, and disappointed, he determined to return home. How to do it? Just then he caught sight of a venerable old man sitting by the roadside, engaged in the monotonous occupation of breaking stones. He was also engaged in smoking a short pipe.

"Can you tell me, my good man, which is the most direct road to Castle Banagher?"

"To where, sor?" asked the evidently amazed stone-breaker.

"To Castle Banagher. My goodness, man, have you never heard of Castle Banagher?"

The proprietor of that fortress thought that it was as far-famed a public building as Notre Dame, or St. Paul's, or the Capitol.

"Heerd tell av it? Castle Banagher? Let—me—see. No. I've lived, man and boy, about these parts for the last sixty-seven years, an' may this pipe be smoked across my grave av ever I heerd tell av Castle Banagher before."

"You know Ballymarun, don't you?"

"Well, yer honour, I've heerd tell av it. I'm no traveller meself, sor. It's along the Isnagarran-road, isn't it?"

"Confound it! that's what I'm asking you."

"Oh, well, then, it *is* along the Isnagarran-road. First turnin' to yer right, an' then it's as straight as ye can go, sor."

When an Irishman has only the very slightest acquaintance with a route—indeed, often when he is completely ignorant of it—he adopts the formula, "as straight as you can go," perhaps for the purpose of concealing his ignorance under a well-assumed bluster, or perhaps from a desire to leave you pretty much to your own discretion. Because, of course, to yourself alone is known how straight you *can* go.

The O'Banagher took the Isnagarran-

road. At that moment he was nearly thirty miles from Castle Banagher, and was travelling away from it. To crown his misfortunes, Fin MacCool had fallen lame, and was limping badly. The rider dismounted, and on examining the poor beast, found his foreleg seriously cut. The afternoon had advanced considerably by this time. There was not a soul stirring. The oppressive silence had a deadening effect on the senator. He was too much cut up to swear even. He stood by the side of his horse—too considerate to tax him further—and waited patiently on Providence. Presently he was revived by the sound of shouts proceeding from a distance down the road, and immediately afterwards he observed, coming in his direction, what appeared at first sight to be an ordinary cart, surrounded by a small mob of ordinary peasants. As the cavalcade approached, however, he was able to distinguish the various figures in the group, and recognized them as actors in a national drama which would be termed by the irreverent farcical, and by the lover of poetry romantic.

On the cart was spread a mattress, and on the mattress sat or reclined a young man adorned with new corduroys, a resplendent red waistcoat, and a caubeen of durable felt. By his side sat a girl of great beauty, also in gay holiday attire. Her striped cotton dress of blue contrasted effectively with the bright red kerchief fastened round her neck. She was of that type of Irish beauty common in Galway, but not frequently encountered so far south—with masses of black hair, big black eyes, and olive complexion. She was glancing down at one of her fingers, which bore the unaccustomed ornament of a ring.

The young man in the red waistcoat was endeavouring to appear unconscious of the fact that he was a principal actor in the scene, and was replying, with a very poor effort at nonchalance, to the numerous witticisms of his pedestrian friends. However, it was useless to conceal the fact. He had just been married to the colleen by his side, and both were being driven home on the bride's dowry—the mattress. The whiskey bottle was circulating freely, snatches of songs were sung, echoes of laughter lingered in the air, while ever and anon a reveller friskier than the rest would detach himself from the group, and commence dancing a jig by the roadside. The horse was led by a boy, whose costume seemed to consist of

half a dozen large rags, attached by strings to various parts of his person. Beside the boy strode a big beggar, whose squalor was appalling, and the multiplicity of whose rags defied arithmetic. In his hand he carried a staff, long enough to reach his shoulder. Various wallets depending from his neck contained refreshments, solid and fluid. The expression of his countenance was extremely villainous. Thick, dirty, matted hair hung in disgusting clots about his forehead. His eyes were bloodshot, and he was muttering to himself untranslatable words—blessings or maledictions none knew but himself. He was the bocough, the wedding beggar.

Apart from the noise and jubilant groups came two silent figures, walking slowly behind the bridal chariot. The one, an old crone, whose face was almost completely concealed by the hood of her long cloak drawn over her head. In her left hand she held a stick, and leaned with her right upon the shoulder of her companion, a young girl, whose eyes were red with weeping, and whose light and lustrous hair, dishevelled, hung about her shoulders. Ever and anon the girl heaved a piteous sigh; and a great unbidden tear would balance itself for a moment under her eyelid, and then trickle suddenly down her blanched cheek—demonstrations noticed but unchecked by the old woman at her side. It was strange to see so piteous a face surrounded by so much good-humoured abandon.

The O'Banagher, gorgeously attired, standing in the middle of the road, and examining his horse's leg with a tender solicitude, could not but attract the attention of the merry group. A "gentleman" is always sure of a large amount of respect from Irish peasantry, although personally unknown to those who accord it. And notwithstanding the extent to which the malt had circulated, and the height to which the hilarity had reached, a reverential silence fell upon the wedding party as they approached the dismounted horseman. The "boys" commenced bowing and scraping to The O'Banagher, and would have passed him shyly; but that gentleman, for reasons sufficiently obvious, called out to them, with all the patronizing familiarity of a feudal chief—

"Well, boys, how are you? Won't you give me leave to drink the bride's health?"

In obedience to this good-natured but peremptory summons, the caravan halted,

and The O'Banagher was speedily surrounded by sympathetic admirers. A chorus arose of "God bless ye, sir," "It's yerself is the kyind gentleman, entirely," "Arrah, long life to yer honour." While audible female whispers of "Sure, isn't it a bewtifle coat?" "Musha, now Kathleen, look at thim buttons!" "In throth, he's a rale gentleman, an' no mishtake," mingled with the rougher notes of exclamation. These and other complimentary observations were cut short by the man with the wallets. He pushed his way roughly into the centre of the group, and stood before The O'Banagher, who looked up at him in considerable dismay; and, indeed, a more repulsive-looking creature it would be difficult to encounter.

"Hwhat's the matther with yer honour?" asked the bocough.

As the intentions of the monster were apparently inoffensive, The O'Banagher explained briefly that he had lost his way; that his horse had fallen lame; and that he would feel extremely obliged by safe conduct to a house of entertainment for man and beast.

"Be the mass, thin, yer honor's in luck's way this blessed evenin'; for it's to Mrs. Connor's shebeen we're goin', where the entertainment is av the most refined description. Here, Paudeen, take hould av the gentleman's horse."

The lad who was leading the horse of the wedding cart handed his whip to a substitute, and took the reins of Fin MacCool.

"Sure yer honor 'll not walk?" asked the polite but ragged beggar.

The O'Banagher preferred walking. The bocough urged. The O'Banagher insisted. However, the bridegroom, unwilling to be outdone, vacated his position beside the fair Peggy, avowing that "the divil a bit he'd be sated an' see a gentleman walking the roads. Sure it's himself 'ud be the proud man that day, av his honor 'ud only consent to take his place."

Overcome by the number and warmth of the invitations, and unwilling to offend his new acquaintances by a non-compliance that might be attributed to upstart pride, The O'Banagher determined to accept the kindly offer; and was immediately hoisted upon the mattress, and sat down complacently by the side of the lovely Peggy. The position was a delicate one, and the attitude somewhat undignified. But the

Isnagarran-road was not Pall Mall, and one might do things on the former which one would scarcely care to perform on the latter thoroughfare. It doesn't do to be always conscious of one's dignity. Why, there's not one of us that isn't, according to Mr. Tennyson, "the heir of all the ages in the foremost files of time"—a reflection that would render existence insupportable, only that we consent to be persistently oblivious of it.

The bocough came round to The O'Banagher's side of the cart, and showered upon him benedictions in unknown tongues, as the procession started amid a universal cheer. The member for the borough of Ballymarun was really the kindest and most gallant of mortals, and as he put his glass in his eye, and surveyed his lovely companion, he appreciated the delicacy of the situation: he blushed a blush deeper than the dye of his coat. The signal was responded to by the lady's cheeks. She didn't seem to relish the exchange at all, and was, indeed, covered with confusion. Pat, meanwhile, the de-throned bridegroom, lit his dudheen, and trudged by the side of the vehicle, keeping a sharp eye upon The O'Banagher, evidently prepared to resent any attempt at flirtation.

Becoming gradually accustomed to the position, but striving to conceal an awkwardness of which he felt supremely conscious, The O'Banagher determined to exercise his well-known conversational powers for the amusement of the bride. His attempts would probably have been crowned with greater success, but for the roughness of the road. Isnagarran-road is one of the worst in Munster; full of deep ruts and prodigious stones hostile to the beast of burden. It was really vexatious, just after the delivery of some little witticism, to be thrown right into Peggy's lap; or occasionally to be pitched almost off the cart by an unexpected lurch of the vehicle to the other side. To this day it is a marvel to The O'Banagher how Peggy kept her seat at all; for keep it she did, unmoved by the erratic motions of the chariot.

"It's a rough road to travel on, mavourneen," said The O'Banagher, regaining the seat from which he had been for the fourth time dislodged.

"Thru for ye, sir," said Peggy, with a smile.

"I trust that your road through life will

have fewer obstacles in it," said the gallant senator, growing metaphorical.

"Faith, I hope so, sir," replied Peggy, looking fondly down at Pat—a look that said, "So long as his strong arms are at my disposal, I haven't much to fear from obstacles."

"Boys, won't you sing something?" The O'Banagher asked, after a pause of some minutes.

The boys, ever ready to oblige a gentleman, after a short discussion among themselves, put forward one of their number, who, after scratching his head and screwing up his face in an agonizing effort of memory, commenced singing, in a most lugubrious tone, the following words, everybody joining in the chorus, while The O'Banagher beat time, and even gave occasional vocal assistance to the minstrels:—

"Och, Biddy Machree, sure you've stolen my heart,
An' berrid it deep in the mowld, love;

For yerself is dhruv home on Pat Donovan's cart,
And meself is left out in the cowl'd, love.

Chorus: And meself is left out in the cowl'd.

Och, Biddy Machree, sure it's cruel ye were
To lave me so lonely an' sad, dear;

Wid eyes full ov tears, an' heart black wid care,
An' me feelin's uncommonly bad, dear.

Chorus: For meself is left out in the cowl'd.

Och, Biddy Machree, sure I bear no ill will
To yerself or the boy ov yer choice, dear;

An' it me gay spirit yer cowl'dness should kill,
Sure down in me grave I'll rejoice, dear.

Chorus: For meself is left out in the cowl'd.

Och, Biddy Machree, sure I hope ye'll survive

All the thrials an' troubles ov life, dear,

An' whin Paddy is dead, av yerself be alive,
Troth, Micky 'll make ye his wife, dear.

Chorus: For meself is left out in the cowl'd."

The tune to which this precious composition was sung was one of those wild Irish chants which have come down, like the wild Irish legends and the descendants of Irish kings, from a very remote period of the world's history. The chorus was howled with great fervour by the whole party, and accompanied with as much gesticulation as was possible during a march. The shrill, clear voices of the women wailed high above the masculine notes, yielding an effect strange and not without a certain uncouth charm. Other melodies followed, but the jaded statesman had ceased to pay them much attention. The first and scarcely perceptible shadows of evening were beginning to lengthen along the meadows, and the great man was thinking sadly of—dinner. Meanwhile, Peggy in the cart was gazing

with respectful awe upon his rich costume of red and white and gilt, the pink tops of his boots, his wonderful spurs, the black round hunting cap perched upon his auburn locks; and no doubt she had her own ideas about the personal charms of the wearer, with his funny little legs and his queer little squint.

"I suppose we'll soon be there," said The O'Banagher, suddenly awaking from his reverie; and without the slightest notion as to where "there" was.

"Sure, we're just at it, sir. There it is, beyant there."

"Where?" said The O'Banagher, turning his head towards the horse, and peering down a road, upon which he could distinguish no object save the two lines of trees stretching interminably before him.

"There, sir; don't you see the thatch beyant the chestnut yonder, and the shmoke? Sure, it's wonderin' what's keepin' us they'll be."

But The O'Banagher failed to distinguish the objects so easily detected by the sharp vision of his companion; and muttering to himself several sentences depicting, metaphorically but reproachfully, the conduct of the Fates in surrounding him with circumstances so unexpected and so unkindly, he resigned himself once more to meditation. The whiskey went round with increased rapidity. The melodies became bacchanalian in subject and boisterous in execution. The bo-cough's utterance had grown husky. Pat's pipe was out. Fin MacCool limped badly, following his ragged groom. The strange, silent pair—the old crone and her fair young companion with the pale face—walked wearily on, still apart and still silent. The long shadows across the meadows were deepening and lengthening, and the sun was red in the sky, when the whole party suddenly halted before a little roadside inn, hidden away among chestnut trees. It was a white-washed house of one storey. Creepers grew up towards the thatch; and over the door was a black board, about two feet in length, on which was inscribed, in white and halting capitals—

"MRS. CONNOR, LICENSED TO SELL
TEA AND TOBACCO."

AN OLD ESSAY ON QUACKS.

THE history of quacks, or strolling va-grants, called mountebanks, ague charm-ers, &c.

- In Edward the Seventh's reign, one Grigg,

a poulturer, in Surrey, was set in the pillory at Croydon, and again in the Borough, Southwark, during the time of the fair, for cheating people out of their money, by pretending to cure them by charms, or by only looking at the patient.

In the reign of King James the First, the Council despatched a warrant to the magistrates of the City of London, to take up all reputed empirics, and bring them before the censors of the college, to examine how properly qualified they were to be trusted either with the limbs or lives of his Majesty's subjects.

Dr. Lamb, a most noted quack, and one who had acquired a large fortune by his pretended medicines, was at last obliged to confess he knew nothing of physic.

Read and Woodhouse, two other contemporary quacks, were likewise brought to justice, and acknowledged the same.

In Stow's Chronicle, we meet with a relation of a quack being set on horseback, his face to the horse's tail, which he held in his hand, led by the hangman through the City, whipped, branded, and then banished.

However lenient we are at present* with respect to the notorious illiterate empirics that now infest this nation, more care was taken formerly of the subjects' constitution, and their health was not suffered to be infected by these poisoners of whole parishes.

Fairfax was fined and imprisoned in King William's time for doing great damage to several people by his *Aqua Celestis*; one Antony, with his *Aurum Portabile*; Arthur Dee, for advertising medicines which he gave out would cure people of all diseases; Tenant, who sold his pills for six pounds each; Aires, for selling sugar-plums; Hunt was punished for putting bills up in the streets for the cure of diseases; Phillips, a distiller, for selling his strong waters, with directions what they were good for, and how persons were to take them.

Any idle mechanic, not caring longer to drudge at day labour, by chance gets a dispensatory, or some old receipt book, and poring over it, or perhaps having it read to him (for many of these present mountebanks can't read), he finds that wild cucumber is powerful in the dropsy; that mercury is good for the itch, and old ulcers; and that opium will give ease.

Down at once goes the hammer, or the

saw, razor, awl, or shuttle; and away to work, to make electuaries, tinctures, elixirs, pills, plaisters, and poultices. Each preparation new named, and his own name decorated with M.D., purchased a lumping pennyworth in Scotland. He spreads pestilence around him—as the mad savage shooting among the multitude with poisoned arrows.

At the best, if any good can be done by these miscreants, it is a chance; as if twenty people fell down a precipice, and two of them should happen to be saved, but not by skill or foresight, but some unforeseen accident in their favour.

People may say that most quack medicines are not intended against the constitution, but only the pocket, and they are too insipid to do either good or harm; but the medicines mentioned above, and which now every dabbler deals in, are in unskilful hands destructive; and we find in our records several persons brought to condign punishment for administering such compositions ignorantly; particularly one, John Not, was fined and imprisoned, for having killed sundry persons with some of those before-mentioned dangerous medicines. Thomasine Scarlet, and two more women, were severely punished for tampering with mercurial medicines.

Formerly these poison vendors were prosecuted by the Government with proper rigour: they were tried and convicted for destroying people by giving them medicines unduly prepared, and transported for the same. This was the case of one Trig, a shoemaker, in Queen Anne's time.

One William Forrester was severely punished for selling the bitter apple; and one Simon Foreman, for administering the wild cucumber, as specifics. These fellows confessed that they knew nothing of the effects of those medicines, that neither of them could write or read, but that an old woman in the country told them that the bitter apple was good for scurvy, and the wild cucumber for the dropsy. Evans, a priest, about the same time was punished for running through the country with his antimonial cup, and killing people with it.

It is not seven years since a large parcel of the coarsest aloes, which to the writer's knowledge two farriers refused to buy to give to horses, were sent up to London and sold to one of these desperate quacks, made into pills, and given as a universal medicine.

The impostors of the present times would

*1740.

persuade the world that there is not anything more easy than curing the most inveterate disease; they put at the end of their names M.D., just as some gamblers are directed to with Esq. after theirs—to impose on the multitude.

Cobblers now set up for regular bred physicians; hackney coachmen and ticket porters for anatomists and natural philosophers; washing-women for chemists; tumblers, merry-andrews, and posture-makers for bone-setters, oculists, and men midwives.

Nothing can equal the ignorance of such empirics but the stupidity of those people who buy their unwholesome preparations.

Many are torn to pieces by violent cholics, and killed outright. Fevers, consumptions, palsies, are often occasioned by such preparations; and I will affirm that these hellish drugs are always attended with a train of fatal consequences.

The use of cordials as advertised is extremely prejudicial. There is no provision these puffed specifics make for particular cases, and the spirit with which they are drawn off to infirm constitutions is fatal, yet the common people believe it is in those cases they are most wanted.

A few simples, with some spices, such as nutmegs, cloves, &c., steeped in wine or French brandy, make a cordial bitter, or stomach elixir; but these quacks do not prepare what they sell us as such in anything better than malt spirits or molasses.

In the spring of the year the common people begin to drink the spirits of scurvy grass as a fine alternative or expeller; yet, as it is sold by those impostors, it is one of the most pernicious and destructive remedies ever advertised, especially to hot saline habits, with whom the disease has been so aggravated that they have broke out in boils; others have been drove into hectics and consumptions. Nor is it likely it should be otherwise, where no regard is had to state, sex, age, or habit of body, but, led away by the name, it is indiscriminately sold alike to all.

TABLE TALK.

OUR American friends say they are a tall people—that's so; and that their country beats creation. They have everything they want, and more too. Their last discovery is in the neighbourhood of Lake Superior, of great beds of copper and magnetic iron

ore. The beds may exist, though certainly it was a work of supererogation on the part of Nature to supply Yankeedom with more of the brazen element; but as to the manner of discovery, exception must be taken. The copper was found by one Absalom P. Perks, who was out with a companion exploring, and had shot a couple of ducks. Not wishing to eat them raw, the friends separated to find the means of cooking them. Absalom had not gone far when his nasal organ advertised him of an odour amongst the rocks as of washing day at home: it was the copper, and of it he scraped together enough to make a saucepan. Turning back to find his friend and announce his success, he became aware of the fact that his companion was about five hundred yards to his left upon a mass of rock, his feet upon the ground, and his body bent into an arch, so that his head and hands rested there as well. He called to him, but he did not move, only waited for help; and on reaching him, it was to find the poor fellow fixed by his head and heels, and it was only by cutting his hair off close to his scalp that his head was freed; while, to extricate his other extremity, the poor fellow had to get out of and leave his boots. The men were, of course, puzzled; but patient investigation showed that they were in a most attractive region—in fact, upon a great bed of magnetic ore, upon which the second explorer had walked in boots thickly plated with iron; while his hair, being iron-grey, had caused his head to be drawn down till it, too, became fixed. The reader will see that this story is far from being probable.

IT WOULD SEEM that Albany Fonblanque was right when he declared that, invent what you might, the children loved the old better than the new, and were always glad to come back to Cinderella; for here, once more in this pantomime season, we have the works of our comic dramatists in full play with hardly a touch of originality in the whole set. At three theatres we have Puss in Boots. Where it has struck one that his ideas were a little stale, he has added novelty by going in for the matter wholesale instead of retail, with the consequence that the old nursery legends are mixed up with a delightful incongruity. For instance—at one theatre we have Little Tom Fucker related to Bo-Peep; at another, Jack the Giant Killer becomes the hero, and pro-

tector of Little Red Riding Hood; at another again, Little Bo-Peep and Red Riding Hood are sisters. But, after all, what matters so long as the little ones are pleased, and revel in fairyland for awhile? It is all gold to them that glitters now, whatever it may be hereafter.

WE HAVE MOST OF US had a hearty laugh at Mr. Burnand on paper, when with vivid pen he describes to us his Happy Thoughts, and sketches the quaint peculiarities of the people he has met; the opportunity is now offered of hearing him read, or rather give viva voce, these same sketches, of which he takes the cream. In plain English, it is a treat, for the chatty humorist would satisfy the most exacting. If laughter be good, surely at this depressing season—jolly Christmas—people ought to take large doses: two hours' Burnandism would be worth fifty physicians' fees.

THE OLD DRUIDS would have stared could they have been in Covent Garden Market a day or two before Christmas Eve, and seen the railway vans come in laden with tons of the pearl-hung mistletoe, much of it from Wales. It was said to be, in olden times, cut with a golden knife. That is doubtful; but certainly gold urges the knife that cuts it now, for there is a brisk trade done in the humble parasite—a small branch fetching a goodly sum. And yet there are those who say that we are not a people of sentiment—even when we buy a few ordinary leafy twigs at a high rate, because there is a legendary halo about them. Pooh! how absurd to say so; it is not that. Mistletoe is the passport issued by the great Secretary of State for Love Affairs; and the possessor has the right, when properly viscéd, to visit for an instant the nectary land, “bee stung newly.” By the way, did the Old Druids ever kiss the pretty priestesses under the rose—that is, the mistletoe?

ANOTHER TRADE in evergreens, too, seems greatly on the rise—namely, that of little spruce firs, in pots for the Christmas trees. We have, of course, to thank Germany for the innovation; but now that we have adopted it, the tree flourishes well in our soil, taking so deep a root that it will never be extinct, and historians of ages to come will bring forward the Christmas tree as an instance of our descent from the Germanic

races—showing that we practised the same rites.

AS REGARDS LIFE in Ashantee, one of the war correspondents writes—“Only this morning I saw a field officer taking reports and transacting business in the open air without other clothing except a flannel shirt. You see, there are no ladies to be shocked by such omissions; but, on the other hand, rightly or wrongly, we believe that guinea-worms and other plagues lurk in the sand. By the bye, as this letter is designed to be of the order gossip, I have no compunction in digressing here upon the subject of vermin. Upon this score Africa may make a boast. The malaria is undeniable, but we have no mosquitoes; fever is a melancholy fact, but fleas are non-existent; dysentery makes many victims, but ticks harass not; the busy B walketh not by night, nor doth the jigger creep by day. For these blessings we give thanks, nor greatly abate our thanksgiving for the sake of a few sandflies. Farther up the country you hear of mosquitoes, but I confess I am not much afraid.”

ONE TURNS TO THE RAILWAY news with a shudder nowadays, so ghastly has been the long array of accidents; but attention is drawn to it by the complaints of travellers respecting the late arrival of trains at their stations. One gentleman declares that there is no such thing on one railway as punctuality. He might have added that too often the signals exhibited prove to be signals of distress; and instead of punctuality, he should have said, no such thing as punctuation, from the bad management of the points.

WE WERE RATHER puzzled lately, on hearing one urchin inform another that he was going to indulge in a “penn’orth of skin and mystery.” Our intellect was illumined upon subsequently reading that a sausage maker had been summoned for having putrid meat upon his premises, and suspiciously near his mincing machine.

Communications to the Editor should be addressed to the Office, 19, Tavistock-street, Covent-garden, W. C. Contributions should be legibly written, and only on one side of each leaf.

Terms of Subscription for ONCE A WEEK, free by post:—Weekly Numbers for Six Months, 5s. 5d.; Monthly Parts, 5s. 8d.

ONCE A WEEK

NEW SERIES.

No. 315.

January 10, 1874.

Price 2d.

JACK'S SISTER; OR, WOMANLY PAST QUESTION.

CHAPTER III.
MARSHTON FALLOWS.



MARSHTON FALLOWS lies in the hollows of Homeshire, within fifty miles of London. A flourishing old town, even as

seen from the railway, which winds along the low ridge of chalk hills lying on its northern extremity: flourishing

and picturesque withal, having a market every Saturday; a minster built in the early Norman period, and rich in Gothic architecture; a grammar school endowed with the right of presenting one youth yearly to a scholarship in Magdalen College, Oxford, and presided over by the Rev. Dr. Northcote, M.A., F.R.G.S., and fellow of the aforesaid college.

Right in the centre of the town stands the market-place—a large, open square, through the centre of which runs the High-street, stretching east and west. Here, at one corner of the square, is the new London and County Bank, with its shining plate-glass windows, grand, white stuccoed front, and brisk young manager, with curly hair and fair moustache, all forming an amusing contrast to the old bank—a square, heavy, stone building, on the opposite side of the way,

with a quaint, massive porch, like a miniature edition of itself, jutting out into the road so as to completely exclude any gleam of light from the deeply sunk, small-paned window on either side; and boasting a couple of ancient, rusty extinguishers, flanking the doorway like iron sentinels keeping guard on either side—useless relics of the past nowadays, though once in constant service for putting out the links carried before the banker's wife when returning from some evening festivity in her sedan-chair. On the huge door, studded with nails, and hidden from view by its sheltering porch, is a large brass plate, dim with years and want of cleaning; but setting forth in plain Roman capitals the words—"Leyburn and Son, Bankers;" and John Leyburn, Esq., banker and county magistrate, is the father of little Jack and Enid, whose acquaintance we made on the melancholy day of their mother's death.

That house is no mushroom building, nor are the Leyburns new people in the Homeshire county; Leyburn and Son having reigned over the old bank ever since Henry the Eighth's time, when it came to pass that a worthy young citizen, having had the honour of entertaining the jolly monarch and his court while passing through Marshton Fallows on one of the royal progresses, was further favoured by being asked to lend his Majesty a silver florin, Bluff Harry being, we may suppose, short of cash on that evening; whereupon the King is reported to have cried out—

"By God's wounds, Leyburn" (his favourite oath), "we will make you our banker, and draw upon you whenever we pass through this worshipful city of ours."

Leyburn bowed low, and answered nought but "Sire, your words are law." However, it would appear that the phrase meant something more than an ordinary courtier's speech in the young townsman's mouth; for, six months later, one Master Leyburn, banker,

is mentioned as having arrived at Whitehall, for the purpose of paying his court to the King, and asking the hand in marriage of a certain rosy-lipped damsel, Mistress Dorothy Paget, who had ridden in the train of good Queen Katharine on the occasion of the royal visit to Marshton Fallows.

Harry the Eighth was not the most amiable of monarchs in general, and rather more fond of talking than giving in marriage. However, it fortunately chancing that he had no special desire to keep the fair Dorothy to himself, and being moreover pleased that his careless word had been so dutifully acted upon, he graciously bestowed the maid on her citizen lover; and furthermore dowered her with five thousand marks in good red gold for a wedding portion—adding, in jocular explanation, that he paid that sum down as interest for the florin lent six months before.

"And I pray God, your Majesty, all my business fare as well in the future as it hath done to-day," Leyburn answered, and so led his bride away, and after much junketing and revelry installed her in the new banking house at the east corner of the market-place in Marshton Fallows.

So runs the family chronicle of the Leyburns; and as the worthy citizen's prayer has been granted by a tolerably fair and constant flow of prosperity ever since, it is little wonder if the present owner of the name claims the right of ranking with the county people on equal terms, and looks down with most sublimely contemptuous toleration on the juvenile erection across the way.

Standing a little back from the High-street, at the farther side of the market-place, is the grand old minster church of St. Winifred's, with the statue of that renowned virgin—just fitting her head, much defaced by time and minus the nose, on to her shoulders—over the arched Gothic porch; and crossing the market-place in a diagonal line, you come to the Corn Exchange, a massive, handsome building, where on Saturdays the farmers sit at little desks before great bags of corn and meal, doing their barter and sale in amicable rivalry; and where, on other occasions, concerts, penny readings, and even amateur theatricals, are given for the delectation of the Marshton Fallowsites. Cross over again to the High-street, and, looking down it past Rudge the new London bookseller's in-

viting shop, and Thompson the draper's, whose flaming prints and gorgeous jackets, of most un-Bond-street-like cut, are familiar to all Marshton Fallows, you may see the white front of the newly renovated Town Hall, airing itself in the sunshine behind six tall young poplar trees, enclosed within a row of little posts and chains.

But we will not go in that direction, if you please; for save at assize times, which only occur once in three years, when the judge and barristers come down from London, and the occasion of the annual county ball, or rarer charity bazaar, there is nothing of interest in the Town Hall; and I want you to look at the grammar school—a tall, brick, gabled house, built in the reign of Elizabeth, once red, but long since faded to a dingy brown, round whose wide portals there are always two or three boys lingering; and from which, at noon and sundown, a perfect sea of urchins rushes forth whooping, shouting, and yelling in the delight of short-lived freedom. It stands at one side of the minster, and has a large playground and two long meadows sloping down to the back of Mr. Leyburn's grounds; for the Leyburns do not live at the old bank now—Leyburn senior being indeed only a sleeping partner in the firm, and keeping his name in it merely till his grandson, Jack, is old enough to be admitted to the title of "Son." The old gentleman lives at Leyburn Court, a grand place in Warwickshire, with an elderly maiden daughter; and being a somewhat dictatorial and choleric individual, while Aunt Jane is decidedly of the acrid and frosty species of old maid, it is a special dread and misery with Jack and Enid to be invited to pay a visit to grandpa; Jack, indeed, having been known to hide for three days in an empty fowlhouse behind the stables, only emerging for occasional raids on the larder, rather than accompany his sister on one of these pleasure (?) excursions.

It is only fair to say that when, Enid being gone, he returned to his home quarters, his father welcomed him with a sound flogging, in lieu of the scriptural fatted calf; but I doubt whether even this rightful Nemesis has changed the young gentleman's views on the subject of trips to Warwickshire.

Jack is only two from the bottom of the fourth form at school—not a very high rank

for a boy who has passed his twelfth year; and Mr. Leyburn has already informed him that, unless he gain the scholarship aforementioned before he is eighteen, he will not be allowed what Jack calls "a shy at college" at all, but be put on a stool at the bank without further delay. Jack says he *will* gain it; and as he is not in the habit of random-boasting, Enid is quite satisfied on the point, and does not feel unsisterly in glorifying Merle, who, though nearly three years Jack's junior, and frequently kept at home by ill-health, is first in the third form, and bids fair to pass his cousin before long; but then Merle is to be a clergyman and go to Oxford, anyhow. Mrs. Leyburn had arranged that with her husband, and Enid is glad, for it prevents any likelihood of the boys clashing.

If Merle, however, beats Jack at learning, the latter has the advantage of being one of those twelve privileged boys who go into school an hour later than their fellows every Thursday morning: a right pertaining to the chorister boys, or those who have joined the choir at the minster. Merle has not a note of music in his voice—and indeed, his narrow chest and weak lungs would always prevent his becoming a singer; but Jack's young trumpet is deep and strong, and, without being particularly mellifluous, is so true that Herr Bäuer, the good old Saxon choir-master, would be sorry to lose him from his young troop, at the head of which marches Clifton Gore, a lad about Jack's age, and also a fourth form boy, but possessing a voice of such exceeding beauty as beats all his fellows to nothing, and which, clear as a lark and fresh as a nightingale, rises above every other, ringing and thrilling in waves of perfect melody from porch to chancel of the old minster—now floating like an angel's whisper in the high, arched roof, now pealing like a bell through crypt and vestry, and making Herr Bäuer clasp his hands in despair that the owner of such a wonderful organ should be a wealthy baronet's only son, instead of a poor lad obliged to make his living by the exercise of his God-given talents.

"Wit dat voice, mein tear," Herr Bäuer would say, spreading out his fat fingers in the air, "you woulst haf all Lonton—ja, and all Paris, mat wit joy; and money! why Gott im Himmel! one, two, tree tousand you would easy make in one season. Jack Leyburn, he haf making for goot base some

day; but *you*!—" and the ten plump and dirty fingers would receive a wave vigorous enough to send a little shower of snuff among the boys; while Jack, passing his arm through Clifton's, would march off in far greater delight at the praise than his companion. For young Gore is Jack's best and dearest friend; and, unsentimental as is the banker's son, Clifton's triumphs are a hundred times better than any of his own. They live close together now, too; for though Clifton's real home is that turreted mansion whose tall flagstaff is just visible over Amberley Wood, which lies about a mile beyond the south bank of the river, his father and mother are at present travelling in Italy, and prefer boarding Master Clifton with Dr. Northcote, to leaving him sole master pro tem. at the Hall; while Jack has only to turn round the corner to find himself in Grove-road, where fifty yards or so of walking brings him to his own house—a large, old-fashioned building, standing back in its ample, high-walled gardens, and looking rather out of place among the newer villas and cottages of this favourite street with the Marshton Fallows gentry; which, turning ere long at a sharp angle, widens into a broad road, planted with trees at either side, leading to St. John's-on-the-Hill, the new High church, and making the fashionable Sunday promenade for the middle-class town-folk.

All this part of Marshton Fallows is called the New Town, and is not nearly so interesting to artists and antiquarians as the old part, with its narrow streets, queer signs, and queerer old houses—some of them fac-similes of Hawthorn's "seven-gabled house"—their sharp, vandyked roof looking as if cut out against the blue summer sky, with a square, latticed window in each gable; and the whole front of the houses crossed and laced with a network of time-stained beams supporting the brick and plaster. Others, again, have their upper storeys projecting in a large bow fully six feet over the little, diamond-paned windows, full of mignonette and scarlet geraniums, and the squat front door beneath. The side walks in this part of the town are barely three feet wide, guarded by stout, moss-grown posts, and full of pitfalls, among which you must pick your way carefully, unless you prefer walking in the middle of the road, which being paved with round,

peaked stones, jumbled together point uppermost, is decidedly painful both for man and beast. Yes; despite the picturesque old houses and quaint, low-browed shops, like frowning old men, with their hatch doors and wonderful painted or gilded signs projecting from the tiled roof, you feel glad to escape from the old town, and passing through the market-place again, with its graceful drinking fountain in the centre, made of white marble, and designed by Sir Francis Chantrey, to ease your feet by a stroll in the grass meadows sloping to the river, which runs along, now foaming over a shallow, pebbly strand, now sleeping in deep and sullen pools, on its way to join the Ouse about half a mile below Amberley village.

That river is the especial delight of the grammar school boys; but it is by no means safe, and those unable to swim are forbidden to bathe in any but one sheltered creek, the limits of which are strictly staked out, and which is popularly known as the "washing tub" among the young gentlemen who frequent it. Jack and Clifton greatly despise the "tub," both being adepts in the national art; but Merle, who gets too chilly in the water to enjoy it thoroughly, is still a prisoner within the line of stakes, and only envies Jack his greater liberty because it separates him from Clifton, who is the general darling of the school, and as much a hero with Merle as with Jack Leyburn.

"Punch" Kinnardson, as the boys are apt to call him, on account of his round back and weak legs, has not lived all his life in Marshton Fallows. His mother was Mrs. Leyburn's sister; and many years ago the Reverend Canon Merle's two beautiful daughters were reigning toasts in the neighbouring county. Both were to make good matches; and it is a proof of the high estimation in which the Leyburns of Marshton Fallows were held, that when Mary, the elder, refused Sir Harry Templemore, a man of rank and fashion, for plain John Leyburn, banker, her father did not attempt to oppose her decision, but gave the young lady his blessing, and dowered her with five thousand pounds, paid into Mr. Leyburn's private account at the bank on his wedding day.

Isabelle, the second and the lovelier of the two, was less fortunate in her marriage, choosing to elope one day with her father's curate—a penniless lad, just ordained, and

without a rag of interest to assist his advancement—and by this imprudent act ruined herself and him alike; for on their writing a penitent letter, imploring forgiveness and permission to return to the rectory, the Rev. Mr. Merle immediately forwarded all Isabelle's trunks, books, and every trifling article of property pertaining to herself to the London Hotel, whence the foolish pair had written, accompanying the consignment with a polite note, in which he said he trusted Mrs. Kinnardson would find her effects all correct, as he must decline any further intercourse with her or her husband for the future.

And to this resolve the father held with unflinching severity: no want of money—and the Kinnardsons suffered grinding poverty, even to lack of the bare necessities of life—softening Mr. Merle's determination, or inducing him to allow Mary to hold the smallest communication with, much less offer any assistance to, her unfortunate sister.

When, however, Miss Merle married John Leyburn, one of her first acts was to endeavour to seek out Isabelle, whose letters, meeting no reply, had ceased entirely for some months past. But, alas! Mr. and Mrs. Kinnardson had left England for the colonies by then, giving their address to none of those who had cast them off; nor did either of them return, until the husband's death drove his wife and child back to England, and to the loving welcome awaiting them with Mary Leyburn. Mr. Merle had died in the interval, leaving a second five thousand pounds—which would have been Isabelle's under other circumstances—to his elder daughter; and she, a sweet, tender-hearted woman, already well-to-do, felt so unhappy at being thus made the means of robbing her only sister, that when Isabelle Kinnardson, broken in health and soured in temper, arrived at Marshton Fallows only to die after a few months of lingering sickness, Mary Leyburn felt towards the little orphan—thus at four years old left to her care—as she might to any innocent creature injured or wronged through her means.

Her kind eyes filled with tears as she contrasted his feeble health and shrunken limbs with her own strong and sturdy children; and as she sat beside him at night, while he wailed and moaned in sickness which had been aggravated, if not induced, by

want of proper food and medical care, her motherly heart overflowed with love for the lonely little child; and she frequently irritated her husband and aroused Jack's jealousy by the persistent indulgences and partiality which no fractiousness or trouble on Merle's part could prevent her showing to her nephew. Indeed, little Kinnardson soon clung to Mrs. Leyburn more fondly than he had done to his own peevish, ailing mother; and would sit on her lap and hang round her neck whenever he had a chance, and much to the contempt of Jack, who despised such demonstrations as unmanly.

And now this mild and loving woman was gone—taken to Him who had said that “even a cup of water given to one of these little ones in His name should not go without a reward.” The birth of a third child, who only lived a few hours, was too much for Mary Leyburn's strength. She never thoroughly recovered; and the three last months of her life were chiefly spent in training Enid for the task that lay before her—that of being the sole medium and softening element in a household which was to contain three men of such varying characters as Mr. Leyburn, Jack, and Merle.

Would Enid's strength be sufficient for such a post? Yes. Looking at the firm sweetness of eyes and mouth, the sole resemblance between mother and daughter, Mrs. Leyburn felt her anxiety fading away; and when her last hour came she scrupled not, as we have seen, to lay a charge too heavy for many women on the shoulders of a little girl not yet ten years old.

CHAPTER IV.

CLIFTON.

JACK jumped up and opened the case-ment; upon which a small and very white hand was laid on his shoulder, and a boy about his own age sprang lightly on to the floor.

“Why, it's Clifton Gore!” cried Merle; and opened his eyes and mouth wide with surprise.

Clifton Gore it was, and he now came forward, smiling on the three surprised faces; but with a little shy uncertainty withal written on his own, as if asking—“Am I welcome?”

Assuredly the answer, in nine cases out of ten, would have been “Yes.”

As he is to be one of my heroes, and as,

despite his faults and follies, I cannot but love him better than many a better man, I am just going to make a slight sketch of a person who, once seen, could never be forgotten by friend or foe.

It was such a handsome face: then as now, simply perfect, and more like the idealized picture of an angel than an ordinary boy; then as now, winning every heart as much by the fascination of expression as the regularity of the features; then as now, a face with all the beauty of woman, all the character of manhood.

Look at it at present, with the firelight dancing on it, now flickering over the broad, fair forehead—off which the golden hair falls in short, silken waves, and the little delicately cut nose, with just sufficient ripple in its Grecian outline to redeem it from effeminacy—now lighting up the long, laughing eyes of that rare violet blue, and shaded by lashes long and dark enough to move the envy of a Circassian dancing girl; and curved, mocking lips, with just a babyish pout in them when asking a favour, which would soften the hardest heart to grant it—now flaming out brightly enough to take in the entire head, so small and well-shaped, and set so lightly and erectly on the slight figure as to give him the effect of being taller than Jack, though in reality the boys are the same height exactly.

Can you wonder that ladies call that boy a “darling,” and grim tutors relax the sternness of their countenances when young Gore is the culprit arraigned before the academical benches? Can you wonder if hereafter he win women's love by the bushel? or if the magic of his eyes and smile be potent both to make and break those most fragile of toys—human hearts?

It would be hard, indeed, to imagine that any length of years could disfigure that noble face with a cloud of remorse, or darken it with shame; that even the bitterest of this world's mischances could even quell the light in those liquid eyes, or force them to the ground in shame before the very ones into which they are now looking so lovingly.

“Il y a des héros dans le mal ainsi que dans le bien,” saith Rochefoucauld.

Is Clifton Gore to be one of these former?

Time will show.

He had turned to Jack at once, though both Enid and Merle spoke their welcome

first—Jack's face, indeed, rather expressing disapprobation—and taking his hand, said, in his own quick, impulsive way—

"Jack, I've no business to come to-night; but I did so want to see you. And I thought you wouldn't mind. Do you?"

"What did you come looking in at the window for?" asked Jack, not committing himself to an answer as yet.

"Because I shouldn't have been allowed to come properly; so I went to bed with a toothache"—his eyes dancing gleefully—"and after tipping old Jenkins not to tell, slipped down the chapel stairs, cut across the garden and field, climbed your wall—didn't I whiten my trousers too, doing it!—and got up by your old dodge of the ivy. It really is as good as a ladder, Jack."

"I dare say!" grumbled Jack. "Nice thing to have a ladder for thieves or any one to walk in at. Enid thought you were a robber."

"Did you, Enid?" turning to her with the pretty, graceful readiness of a grown courtier. "And you are so pale. I hope I didn't frighten you, did I?"

"No, indeed, Clifton; and Jack is very glad to see you, I know," she answered, anxious to excuse her brother's seeming churlishness.

"Jack!" with a smile at his friend, "why he's delighted; he always is when he's crossest. Dear old beggar!—he may be as cross as he likes with me to-night. I don't mind."

The full understanding of the other's troubles conveyed in these few words was just what Jack wanted. He put his arm over Clifton's shoulder with a great sigh of relief, as he said—

"Of course I'm glad to see you, Clif. Oh, Clif, it's all so horrid!"

Clifton did not ask "What?" as some boys might have done; he only said, cheerfully—

"You'll come to school to-morrow, won't you?"

"Yes; but I don't care for that, when of course I shall be back of all you fellows," relapsing into grimness.

"Not much, I think," said Clifton, brightly. "You see, there's been Saturday and Sunday between; and then Thursday you always get bad marks in writing class, so you won't lose by missing that; and, Jack, we didn't have history to-day as usual."

"How's that?"

"It's put off till to-morrow; so we had Greek instead."

"By George, how jolly!" cried Jack. "But why? I don't make out."

"Oh! Well, one of the boys got the fourth form to petition for it on account of you; and old Northcote was in a good humour, and agreed."

"One of the boys!" repeated Jack, scornfully. "Why don't you say it was you? What a humbug you are, Clif!" and he gave his friend's arm a grateful grip and shake.

"Oh, Clif, how good of you! I'm so very glad," cried Enid, pleasure for Jack overcoming her shyness, and making her great eyes shine happily.

Clifton laughed carelessly.

"I think you want some one to be good to you, Miss Enid," he said, smiling. "You can't think how ill you do look. Doesn't she, Jack?"

Jack hadn't noticed it, of course; but he looked at her now, and then, turning to Clifton, said in a solemn undertone, as in full explanation—

"We've got Aunt Jane here?"

"Aunt Jane!—who's she?"

"The one that lives with grandpa."

"Oh-h! And isn't she nice?"

"No, she aint nice; she's a beast."

"Oh, Jack, she doesn't mean—"

"Now, you hold your tongue, Enid. Girls always try to finny off things. I tell you what it is, Clif, if it wasn't for father I wouldn't stand her two minutes. Fancy" (sinking his voice) "her in *mother's* place."

"Poor old Jack! but never mind—you'll be going to school to-morrow; so, after all, it's little Enid to be pitied most."

"Oh, Enid never minds anything," said Jack, speaking simply as a matter of fact, and not at all as if it were a merit in Enid.

"Oh, no, I don't mind, Jack," said Enid, serenely, and equally unconscious of any merit in the matter.

Clifton, however, looked at her admiringly. Indeed, having no sisters of his own, and having seen other little sisters squabbling with and snubbing their brothers, he rather considered Enid a model of what a little girl should be, and quite a brilliant example of unselfishness and good temper; while Enid looked up to him in shy admiration, as a sort of prince and hero, from the fact of his being Jack's friend and leader; and was fond of him

besides, in her quiet, little, faithful way, because he was more gentle and friendly with her than is the wont of schoolboys towards little maidens of nine or ten, and had on one occasion signalized himself by an act of gallantry in her behalf, which was such a good example of Clifton's character that I must tell it you.

Enid happened to be spending the day with Dr. Northcote's little girl; and Clifton, who was boarder there, happening to run in to mend the handle of his cricket bat before going down the field, heard the two children discussing a juvenile party to which they were both going.

"I shall wear my new white frock," said Rosy Northcote, pompously; "with a sky-blue sash, and a sky-blue ribbon in my hair. Sister Mary will wear a rose in hers; but she is sixteen, you know. Don't you wish you were sixteen, Enid? It must be so nice to wear roses in one's hair."

"Very nice," said Enid, who was not quite eight. "But still, a sky-blue ribbon will look very pretty."

"And nurse says it is to have great, long ends. What shall you wear in your hair, Enid—pink?"

"No," said Enid, rather dolorously; "nothing. Mamma said so. I had a new blue ribbon last time, and nurse told me to put it in the drawer, and I didn't; and"—her voice trembling—"Flosschewed it up. So mamma said I should not have a new one next time."

"Well, I think that was very unkind of your mamma," said Rosy, "when you forgot it, of course. Nurse took me to choose my ribbon my own self."

"No, I didn't forget it. I told nurse she might put it away," put in Enid, with prompt honesty; "and so nurse said mamma was right not to waste money on getting another; but I think yours will look very pretty, Rose," with a brave effort at forgetting her own trouble.

"So do I," said Rosy, who didn't appreciate the effort. "But I should like to be sixteen and wear a flower."

Clifton had mended his bat by this time, and a bright idea struck him. He was too young to enter into Mrs. Leyburn's reason for denying Enid the new ribbon; but he could appreciate the difference between Enid's uncomplaining good temper and Rosy's selfish triumph; and, resolving that the former should be rewarded, jumped up

from his seat, glanced at the clock, made a mental calculation as to how long it would take him to get to the High-street and back before joining the other cricketers, and tapping Enid on the head, said, meaningly—

"Never mind, Enid, I dare say you'll wear flowers before Rosy does."

After which he tore downstairs, without waiting for an answer from the astonished little girls. Arrived at the market-place, he proceeded to fumble in all his pockets, and was rather discomfited at finding only sixpence in coppers therein, being all that remained of his week's pocket money. Still, roses might be purchasable for sixpence. He was not clever in the cost of such articles, and as the party was for that evening, and he was in a hurry to join the cricketers, there was no time for getting a loan from any one; wherefore he hurried along looking for artificial flowers, and resolving to ask the price of the very first he saw. Now, it so happened that Mr. Davies, the confectioner, had just placed a fine birthday cake in his window, which, among other ornaments, boasted a gorgeous pink rose, with four emerald green frosted leaves, and a silver paper stalk growing stiffly out of its white sugar crown. Clifton's attention was caught at once by this floral triumph of art, and not being conversant with the particular shops where ladies buy their head-dresses, his only doubt was as to whether such a lovely article could be bought for sixpence. He went in and asked.

The confectioner opened his eyes wide, and said—

"Why, dear heart, Master Gore, whatever can *you* want with that rose?"

"That's nothing to you, Davies," said little Clifton, who would have died rather than confessed to buying flowers for a girl. "I rather like the thing"—trying quite unsuccessfully to hide his intense admiration for it—"and, if it isn't more than sixpence—why, I'll buy it."

"Why, really, sir—he! he!—sixpence would be giving it away!"

Its real worth might have been three-pence.

"Well, I aint going to give more, Davies. I *always* buy of you."

"Ah, well, Master Gore, on that account, and to *you*, sir."

The flower was taken out, twisted in a piece of paper, and given to Clifton, who paid his sixpence, and departed in huge

triumph. Unfortunately, it was blowing hard, and the paper covering, not being very secure, blew away before Clifton had taken many steps, leaving his rose denuded. To put it in his pocket would have spoilt it; and so he was reduced to carry it openly in his hand—a spectacle which provoked the unmannerly mirth of another little urchin, one of the Rev. Simeon Smallwater's private pupils. Between these young gentlemen and the grammar school boys civil war raged, as a matter of course; and here was an opportunity for annoying one of the stronger party too good to be lost.

Young Smallwaterite began to jeer.

Clifton sternly bade him shut up.

Smallwaterite said he didn't take his orders from pretty little girls with roses to stick in their curls.

Clifton asked did he want a thrashing?

Smallwaterite hoped he wouldn't be so unladylike as to think of such a thing.

Clifton darted at him, and punched his head.

Smallwaterite ducked, came up behind him, and knocked his hat off into the mud.

Clifton grew scarlet, laid his rose carefully on a doorstep, and turned up his cuffs for battle. The wind instantly blew his rose on to the pavement. Smallwaterite laughed loudly, and threw pebbles at him. A lady, superb in velvets and silks, happened to be passing on her way to make a morning call. To her Clifton presented the flower, saying, with a bow—

"Please be so kind, ma'am, as to hold this for me a moment;" then, without waiting for an answer, rushed away, knocked Smallwaterite down, pummelled him till he howled, pursued him to the corner of the street, and then returned, a little flushed but quite cool, and, dusting his jacket, picked up his hat, wiped it, put it on, and, taking his rose from the lady with a courteous little speech of thanks, walked off homewards. I have been told by an eye-witness that the expression of the worthy dame, who happened to be stout, ponderous, and dignified, at thus being made a sort of extempore bottle-holder, was rich to behold. Indeed, this eye-witness, a curate of St. Winifred's, was so much amused that, going on to see Mrs. Leyburn, he told her all about it.

Shortly afterwards entered Miss Enid in charge of the Northcotes' nurse, and rosy with delight.

"Clifton Gore had given her that rose, and might she wear it at the party? She wouldn't ever be rude to nurse again, and Clifton would be vexed if she didn't."

Mrs. Leyburn felt very much inclined to laugh. She sent Enid to take off her hat, and thereupon nurse took an opportunity of mentioning that Clifton had "only sixpence that morning, so he must have spent that on it. It weren't fit to wear for a young lady, nohow; but he were such a ridiculous boy, and, if she might make so bold, little missy did deserve a new ribbin, she did, she had behaved that nicely when Miss Rosy was a-boasting of hers."

Mrs. Leyburn smiled and listened, finally dismissed nurse, had her little laugh, and took commune with herself: the result of which was that Miss Enid was called in, given a little motherly talking to, and permitted to wear the much-endangered rose.

"Of course, I know nine out of ten would say I was wrong," she observed to her husband that evening. "Mrs. A. would have held to her word, and not let Enid wear flower or ribbon; Mrs. B. would have laughed at the idea of her wearing that atrocious rose, but consoled her with the ribbon. However, I must think a little of the boy; and after spending his last sixpence, and doing battle for the thing besides, if it were to make the child a laughing-stock she should wear it."

And accordingly the kind mother took trouble to curl up the stiff stalk, extinguish the violent leaves as much as possible, and tuck the rose among the thick brown curls, on the little head that was to wear it: a labour of love that was rewarded not only by Enid's intense gratitude, but by the sight of Clifton at the party, with a bruise about the size of a shilling over his left eye, the cause of which he was steadfastly declining to tell to at least six of his inquiring schoolfellows.

But Enid wore the rose, and a wreath of smiles as brilliant, and little Miss Northcote looked sulky in her sky-blue ribbon.

Of course, this little incident had won Clifton a firm friend in Jack's small sister; and now he was just giving her a message from his mother to go up to the Hall and ask the gardener for a basket of grapes, adding, because he knew she would like it, that she had better go on Saturday, because then Merle could go with her, when there came a sharp "Jingle—ingle—ingle" from below.

"That's the bell to take away the tea-things, and for us to go down," said Enid; as Jack muttered, "Botheration!" and shook his fist at the noise.

"Then I'm off, or I shall be caught, and that would never do," cried Clifton. "Good-bye, Jack; good-bye, Enid. Mind you go, and take Merle. Why, where is the little chap?"

Where? Enid looked round, but Merle had vanished; and Clifton, afraid of being found there, slipped out of the window, while Jack and Enid flew downstairs, expecting to find their cousin there before them. He was not, however; and inquiry being made for him, Enid ran upstairs again, and soon discovered the absentee curled up on his own bed, with his face in the pillow.

"Are you asleep, Merle?" she asked, softly.

"No." With his shoulder turned to her, and his face more buried.

"Why are you lying down there? Have you a headache?"

"No."

"Oh! Merle, you are crying. What is the matter?"

"Nothing. Go away."

"But, Merle, aunt has asked for you. Do tell me what's the matter. Do, Merle, dear?"

"Go away, I tell you. You don't care. No one cares for me. Clifton never speaks to me, and I like him quite as much as Jack does, who isn't even civil to him; and yet he only just gives me a *nod* (sob), and never even says a word to me (sob, sob). It's all Jack, Jack, Jack, and favouring *Jack*; and you're as pleased as possible, you are (sob, sob, sob). And I wish Aunt Mary were here; *she* cared for me more than for both of you. I wish—I wish she were back!"

Here a great burst of sobbing, and face hidden deeper. Enid put hers down in the pillow too.

"Oh! Merle," said she, very sorrowfully, but without a touch of resentment at the ungenerous boast, "I wish she were, so much; but I care for you too, Merle; and"—trying to lift his face and speak cheerfully—"what do you think Clifton's last words were?"

"What?" lifting a very moist, red face and rumpled head from the pillow.

"That you and I were to go on Saturday to get grapes from the Hall gardener."

"Really, Nid?"

"Yes, really; and he asked where you were."

"Oh, Enid, how jolly! Aint Jack going too?"

"I don't know. But Merle, stop!" for he was already at the door in his recovered spirits. "You can't go down so. Your hair's all on end."

"Oh, bother! give it a brush down, like a dear."

"And your face is all swelled and red."

"Oh! I can say I've a toothache."

"But you haven't, Merle!"

"Well?" very crossly.

Enid began to find her motherhood sit heavily on her.

SCENTED WITH LAVENDER.

AT SUNDOWN.

DO you know what it is to be an invalid? to lie on a sofa day after day in the same position, and never stir; to look at the four walls of the same room day after day, and never anything else; to suffer the same pain day after day and week after week, and never find any relief? If you do not, thank God for it, for I do; and I assure you it is the hardest life any human being can live; hard even for a world-worn, heart-sick man or woman, but doubly hard for a young person, lively, energetic, full of ardent hopes and keen ambitions. And yet even such a punishment has its alleviations. Yes, though only two years ago I was a healthy, happy girl, full of energy and animation; even so I am not wholly wretched, and many a stray glint of sunshine peeps round the end of the sofa in the corner of the room next the window, where I lie most days and most evenings, too; sometimes reading, sometimes writing—as I am doing now—but just as often gazing out into the street, or lying with closed eyes musing over all the sweet and sad occurrences in the past or present, which have rung the changes on my chequered life.

There is no beautiful prospect to be seen from my window, no wooded hills, sparkling waves, or elaborate grounds. My home is in a London street—a small, close, stuffy house, one of a quiet terrace situated in the respectable, nay, semi-aristocratic shades of Kensington. It is not a very aristocratic dwelling itself; the staircase is painfully narrow for persons of ample size; and the

hall door, when open, comes so close up against it that it is rather difficult for a visitor to make his or her exit with proper dignity. The ceilings, too, are so low that when it grows dusk they almost seem to settle down over my upturned face; and if any one crosses the tiny drawing-room overhead, the rafters creak, and the gaseliers jingle as if the whole fabric were on the point of coming down and burying me under its ruins. But these are trifling inconveniences; and, as the aunt with whom I live says—

“If we were living in a large, vulgar house at the East-end, no one would come to see us at all, and we might just as well not have a prim drawing-room and a gilt chandelier.”

Ah, well, I have no doubt she is right, and it is a comfort to be genteel, even if one cannot be rich or comfortable; at least I suppose so, though I recollect that when my dear father was alive, and I was the merriest and maddest of a large, merry, madcap family, we were all very comfortable without being positively rich, and never troubled ourselves about gentility or vulgarity, or knew the meaning of “living for appearances,” the social curse of English life.

However, I am not going back to those days. There is a gulf that lies between that time and this; not a broad gulf, not a long one, only the length and breadth of a man's grave; but that gulf has made an impassable barrier between past and present, has closed a door which I would not open again if I could; for, granted that the doing so restored home and money, friends and even health, they would all weigh as nothing beside the loss of him whose lonely grave lies far, very far from here, under the fierce sun of a southern land.

But it is Sunday evening now, and I am lying on my sofa gazing out of the window, and musing, as is my wont. Exactly opposite is a Dissenting chapel, the New Jerusalem, as it styles itself; with on either side, but modestly retiring behind their slips of sun-baked garden, the residence of an artist with nine sons, and a day school for little boys. The window is open, for it has been a close, sultry summer day; and one craves for as much air as it is possible to get in this close, sultry, over-populated London. I have drawn back the curtain, too, and from my recumbent position can catch a glimpse of a small strip of pale greenish-grey sky,

against which the dark-red houses, with their writhing chimneys and pointed gables, show as if cut out. I can see also one corner of the stern façade of the little chapel, and rising from behind it a light column of reddish smoke soaring straight up into the twilight; then if I raise my head a little I get a view of the dusty side pavement over the way, along which little groups of people, mostly females, all of the poorer classes, and all dressed in the most flaring and gaudy defiance of good taste, are proceeding to evening service at the chapel. And now the parlour window opposite is thrown open, and the artist's wife, a grey-haired woman, habitually attired in a comfortable but somewhat slovenly species of bed-gown, leans out, and looks first up and then down the road, as if wondering whether the painter husband and nine sons will be home in time for tea. Poor woman! I fear she leads but an uncomfortable and irregular life, for the nine appear to be of most erratic and Bohemian habits. I do not know whether they all follow their father's profession, but I fancy they have at any rate imbibed his tastes; for I see them leaving the house at all times, attired in that semi-picturesquely ugly costume which artists in London love to affect, and bearing either canvases or paint-boxes under their arms. They come home at all times of the night, too, and I often hear loud voices on their doorstep long after all respectable people are popularly supposed to be in bed and asleep; but none the less they are a merry family enough, and the little terrace sometimes rings to the music and singing and bursts of hearty laughter which proceed from that bay-windowed sitting-room. The father, too, a handsome man with white hair, and a brow like an antique statue, looks proud and happy amid his sons; and even the anxious mother has a cheerful face, and if she be untidy, does not appear to be aware of the fact.

Ha! here *is* one of the sons—a tall young fellow, very dusty and ill-dressed, and carrying the inevitable canvas under one arm, while the other hand grasps a fishing-rod, and his pockets bulge with colour boxes, tubes and angling *matériaux*; from all which signs, I conclude his Sunday has not been spent in churches, orthodox or otherwise, but down in the green, quiet country, where Nature holds her silent court, and sits smiling and rose-crowned, in all the glowing magnifi-

cence of her summer glory. There! he has gone in now, and two of the others have come up, and the mother has met them all with a smile and kiss, and hurried them into the lamp-lit parlour, whence the mingled aroma of buttered muffin and fried herring is wafted across the way.

The last of the congregation has dawdled into the little chapel at last, and a sudden burst of nasal singing wakes up the sparrows which build among the ornaments on the portico, and sends them chirping and fluttering in a dusky cloud into the grey evening sky. They are singing the seventeenth hymn of Whitfield's collection, and the strain brings to my mind Robert Browning's description of the little chapel of "Mount Zion in Love-lane."

In very truth, I do believe there is more leniency and more indulgence in Heaven for all us poor blind seekers after truth than we can find among one another. For my part, though the wish of my life has been to visit Italy, and linger awhile in that Rome whose corruption Browning stigmatizes so severely, I have never seen more of Europe than Lisbon Harbour, with its dingy red palace standing on a hill, and the green and myrtle-clad slopes of Cintra looking down on the blue, glittering waters of the Tagus. "Quem nao ha visto Lisboa, nao ha visto cousa boa," say the Portuguese, in that fruity tongue which yet sounds harsh and guttural beside the more musical Spanish; but there are places as "boa" and climates as beautiful as either Rome or Lisbon. After all, from the clear sky of Italy and the blue mouth of the Tagus it is but a jump to the clearer sky and bluer waters of that Spanish city in South America, where I spent ten such happy years.

Why, just to think of those Sunday evenings in a Monte Videan summer! One marvels they could be so pleasant, and yet so utterly different to everything that one considers pleasant and proper in English Sundays. Lying back on my pillows now, with my eyes on the strip of grey sky, and the strain of "Jerusalem the Golden" ringing in my ears, I can see quite plainly the white towers of the Cathedral—the "Matriz," or mother church, as the Spaniards term it—rising majestically into a sky, not green or grey, but blue; blue with an intensity of clearness and lustre beyond all English ideas; blue as a turquoise, or rather as a hollow sapphire of the purest water, and

studded with millions of stars, large, brilliant, grouped in glittering constellations, or shining calmly down like great gleaming eyes on the white, weary city. I see the "Plaza," with its outer fringe of acacias drooping under their white tassel-like blossoms, and its regular walks intersecting each other, and fringed by the graceful "Paraiso" or Paradise-tree, whose spreading clusters of lilac flowers make the air heavy with a weight of sweetness. I see the gay groups of brightly-dressed people—Basques and Galicians, negroes from Africa and Indians from the interior, French, German, English, slight, swarthy Spaniards, and tall, graceful, gloriously-beautiful Spanish women, with eyes like velvet and the walk of goddesses, so lightly and so gracefully they glide over the pavement—all trending in the direction of the Cathedral. I see the ruddy light streaming from its portico, and following the crowd I ascend the broad marble steps, and pass from the hot, still night into the cool, marble-paved, dimly-lit nave. High up in a white and gold pulpit, looking very like a bee in the gilded chalice of a tiger lily, I see the preacher, holding forth with impassioned tones and almost frenzied gestures. But where are the congregation? I see the entire nave of the lofty building carpeted with a swarm of bright-coloured creatures, sitting as close together as ants in an ant-hill on the marble pavement. Can they be men and women? No, all women. Spanish custom does not admit a mingling of males and females in the house of God, so we of the fairer sex have usurped the nave altogether, and fill it completely—young and old, rich and poor, white and black, sitting close together just as they happen to drop on their first entrance, save where some dame of rank or fashion has elevated herself to the invidious dignity of a low chair or a small square of prayer carpet, where she sits enthroned like an Arab on some oasis, and surveys the living desert around her. But meanwhile, where are the men? There. Don't you see them? filling up the aisles, and leaning against the huge pillars, whence they gaze with admiring eyes at the sea of dark beauty spread out before their feet.

They do nothing else; not one, except the very poor or the very old, makes any pretence of attending to the service. They are there because it is the "mode," and they go to look at the "señoritas," and exchange free comments on their relative charms, and

the "señoritas" reciprocate their smiles and glances with interest; and a great deal of whispering and giggling, mingled with the ceaseless clicking of countless fans, goes on all round and forms a sort of rippling undercurrent to the sermon and subsequent rosary. But all this while the candles on the altar have been growing and growing in number, till the whole sanctuary glares out on us, a pyramidal blaze of glittering light, and there is something in the centre which shines even more brightly still. A small bell rings, and giggling, whispering, stray glances, and arch smiles all cease on the instant. Again it rings, once, twice, thrice—and for one minute every head is bowed and every eye is closed in mute adoration, as the officiating priest raises the Sacrament aloft, and blesses the congregation.

The next moment all is over; the organ peals forth a lively strain, the candles are rapidly extinguished, the young men rush to the doors and take up a position on either side of the steps, where they stand in double rows like sentinels on guard, while the ladies sally forth in all the elegance and luxury of Parisian toilets combined with Spanish beauty, and pass slowly between the double row of their dusky and bearded admirers. And so is conducted, so ends, the most solemn service of the church in South America. After all, the nasal chanting and overdrawn "experiences" on the other side of the way are not the only faulty things to be found in the cause of religion. But see, the people have all flocked out to the plaza, now brilliantly lit and filled with chattering and flirting groups, who sit on the benches eating ices, or pace languidly about, while a full military band stirs the warm, pure air with the solemn melodies of Mozart and Beethoven. And we, too, come forth; and threading our way through the crowd—who think no harm in commenting audibly on my younger sister's clear skin and golden hair—wend our way homewards to a white house near the sea, in whose lofty rooms the windows and doors stand wide open to catch every fleeting breath of air, and where visitors soon drop in one by one, and rocking-chairs are pulled out into the long balcony, and some one goes to the piano and sings—oh! tell it not in Gath—one of Moore's melodies; and the rest lean back, and fan themselves and talk, gazing the while over a broad expanse of water, blue, still, and lustrous as the sky above, stretching away

as far as the eye can reach to the wide horizon, and studded with a triple row of red, motionless lights—the watch lights of the combined fleets of France, England, and America, at rest on the broad bosom of the mighty La Plata.

But all the while that I have been dreaming the service over the way has been going on, and the evening fast shifting into night. Once more the congregation pour out of the stuffy little chapel, and subside down the cool, gaslit street. My aunt comes down from her Sunday evening nap in the drawing-room, which she takes in company with Wilson's "Sacra Privata" and "Hymns Ancient and Modern"—one in her hand, the other on the chair beside her. My sisters walk in from their place of worship, and being admonished that tea is ready, run upstairs to take off their bonnets, one of them pausing for a moment to say, "Your young couple were not at church, Ruth. I'm afraid he is worse."

I feel sorry, and hope not. But in the meanwhile you are wondering to whom she alludes. Not to any friends or even acquaintances of mine—unless the interest I take in them entitles them to be ranked as such—but a young man and woman whose names, dwellings, and position in life are all and equally unknown to me. I saw them first shortly after we came to London, little more than a year ago. I was stronger then, and got about more, and he used to bring her and her sister, both pretty, lively-looking girls, to church. It was easy to see that he was the lover of one, and easy also to discover that neither of the girls was used to our service, for one had no prayer book, and looked about her all the time, while the other used his, following his finger to find the places, and giving a hint now and then to her sister as to standing or kneeling. This happened once or twice; and then came a Sunday when the young man walked in with one sister alone, and I noticed that she wore a white bonnet with orange blossoms, and sat very close to him, looking shyly happy. Next Sunday they came again, and when the Communion Service began she took his hand and went up with him to the altar rails, and I could not help thinking of Coventry Patmore's lines:—

"Maid choosing man, remember this,
You take his nature with his name;
Ask, then, what his religion is,
For yours will soon be of the same."

After this they never failed, and wet or dry, whenever I was at church, there too were the happy little bride and her tall husband; always together, always loving and bright-looking, and more especially so as the time came when her cheek grew paler, her step slower, and she evidently seemed to need the strong arm and tender watchfulness which were ever at her hand. And then—why then I fell ill, too ill to go to church at all; and when I got about again, the first thing I saw on approaching the church was my young couple, standing on the steps in company with a very small nursemaid and a very large baby, in all the glory of flounced long-clothes. They went into church before me, and I had leisure to notice that, though the young wife's roses had returned, her husband looked thin and worn, and coughed pitiably during the service. Their clothes, too, were, if not shabby, the reverse of new, for the pretty mamma's dress was faded, and her bonnet strings not nearly as fresh as the ribbons on baby's white robe; and I felt quite sorry for them as time went on and showed more plainly the sunken chest and hollow eye of the young husband, the poverty-stricken look of the girl, and the care lines on either brow. It was piteous to see her bright eyes filling with tears as she glanced up at him every now and then during the service; to hear the hacking cough which told too plainly of the hungry demon which was devouring him; and to mark that when they went up to receive the Sacrament now, his hand often rested on *her* arm for support.

One Sunday, after an unusually long fit of coughing, I remarked a bright red stain on the handkerchief he held pressed to his mouth. He glanced quickly at her to see if she had observed it, and, putting it in his pocket, leant back in the pew as if utterly exhausted; and when Communion time came, and she rose and offered him her arm, he shook his head with a sad smile, as if the effort were too much for him. The next moment, however, he changed his mind, and helping himself up by her arm, crept very, very slowly up to the altar rails and knelt down. Poor young thing! I saw the quivering of her bowed shoulders, and knew she was weeping; but they both looked happier when they returned to their pew, and I felt he was pleased that he had conquered his weakness, and not suffered

her to go alone to that feast they had always shared together.

I never saw them again. Once more I was back on my sofa; and I fear much that next time I am able to go to church the pew in front of me will only be tenanted by a sad little widow and her orphaned babe.

After all, there are worse lots in life than mine, and the sickness which robs a family of its prop and head is a harder cross than that which only preys on an orphan girl, with hardly a tie or duty to bind her to earth.

THE ABDUCTION OF THE O'BANAGHER.

CHAPTER II.

MRS. CONNOR was the mother of the bride, and stood in the doorway of her cottage, waiting to welcome her children. Half the country-side seemed to have assembled at the house to greet the returning party, and one or two of them, greater travellers than the rest, discovered the identity of their chance guest, whose name was known to all. The intelligence soon went round. Attentions were showered upon the head of the worthy gentleman as he descended from the conveyance, tearing the mattress with his spur during the transit. For a moment he was a greater object of interest than even Peggy herself; and when Mrs. Connor came forward to receive the newly-married pair, she extended a welcome to The O'Banagher with an amount of respectful effusion most agreeable to witness. Mrs. Connor, however, was not a woman of mere words. On ascertaining the cause of The O'Banagher's presence, the motherly creature allowed her kindness to take a practical form. Fin MacCool was taken round to the little stable, a message was despatched to the nearest horse-doctor, and the illustrious arrival was conducted into the kitchen, amid many apologies for its poor appearance and homely furniture. He had only to make himself as comfortable as circumstances would permit.

The guests meanwhile filed through the passage that traversed the house, and proceeded to a barn at the rear of the premises, which had been fitted up for dancing.

Mrs. Connor remained behind, to supply the wants of her guest.

"It's a poor place for the likes of yer honour to put up wid, but it's clane and wholesome, sor; and if there's anything you'd like to take now, sure it's meself 'ill get it for ye wid a heart and a half."

"My good creature, the place is really charming—upon my soul, it is now; and if you'd just let me go somewhere and have a wash, and get me something to eat—anything, I don't care what—it's infinitely obliged to you I'd be, Mrs. Connor."

Mrs. Connor bustled in and out of the room, bringing with her articles of the toilet. First, an immense wooden basin, primitive in shape, but surprisingly clean; then a large stone jug, containing water; then a towel and a piece of soap; and lastly, the smallest possible piece of looking-glass. These trophies she arranged on a low table in a distant corner of the apartment. Thither she finally conveyed a clothes-horse of gigantic proportions, and covered with linen. With this improvised screen, she shut off the corner; and with profuse apologies, but with added assurances that his honour would prefer it to the bed-rooms, she conducted the O'Banagher towards the screen, opened it to let him enter, closed it again, and soon had the satisfaction of hearing his honour spluttering and scrubbing at a great rate. The hospitable soul then set about making preparations for a meal; and by the time the guest had finished his ablutions, a collation of cold chicken and ham and hot potatoes was laid upon the table for his accommodation. The O'Banagher emerged—red from the friction of a very rough towel, but smiling good-humouredly.

"Upon my honour, Mrs. Connor, that dressing-room of yours is as comfortable as and a deal cleaner than the lavatories at our old Club."

The evil temper of the morning had evidently blown over. He had determined to make the best of a bad case. There was no earthly use in upbraiding fate. Fate was so decidedly prejudiced against him, that he would gain a decided advantage over fate by concealing his chagrin. And after all, when he considered all the circumstances of the case—Well, things might have been much worse. There were certain sad reflections, certainly: his absence from home, the lameness of his horse, the anxiety of his servants, the confusion at Castle

Banagher, and—saddest reflection of all—the failure of his plans matured for the captivation of Miss Mulligan. On the other hand, he reflected, gratefully, "I am well entertained by an amusing people. I am an honoured guest at a delightful wedding party. I am sitting before an ample repast, prepared by the skilful hands of a charming hostess." So the little monarch accepted his fate contentedly, and was soon eagerly devouring the simple but capital dinner before him. The oft-recurring Alfred in the neatherd's hut was not a spectacle more edifying.

Shouts of laughter, strains of music, the loud reverberation of double shuffles, were borne into the kitchen from the barn at the rear. But although Mrs. Connor made an occasional allusion to the proceedings outside, she did not once speak of joining the revellers till her guest, avowing he hadn't eaten so hearty a meal in his whole life before, threw himself back in his chair, and surveyed the fragments of the feast. Not exactly knowing how he would receive the invitation, the hostess inquired cautiously and negatively—

"P'raps yer honour wouldn't care to see the dancing?"

"Wouldn't care! Nonsense, Mrs. Connor; why, that's the identical object I have in view in waiting at all." Saying which, he arose and offered his arm to Mrs. Connor, who timidly accepted the honour. They stumbled through the back-yard—full of deep holes where the pigs rooted, and where stagnant water always lay—past the hayrick, through the gate, and stood before the open door of the barn. It was a fine scene. Candles thrust into primitive sockets stood out from the walls, and—caught by the draught from the door, and the motions of the air given by the rush of the dancers—threw an uncertain and romantic light on everything. There was no attempt at decoration. Rude forms drawn up along the sides of the room received the exhausted dancers, but most of those not engaged in "welting the flure" preferred to sit on the ground itself. In the centre of the barn was a large board (possibly the barn door), upon which Terpsichorean duels were fought with great skill and daring. A blind fiddler, of wonderful vigour and unflinching good temper, supplied the entire of the musical portion of the entertainment, assisted now and then by one of the boys,

who would whistle a bar or two when the violin showed tokens of weariness.

The frolic at times amounted to wild abandon, and yet an observer had no fear of the loud licence degenerating into debauchery. It was a picture for Wilkie, not for Hogarth. So free a revel could be safe only under exceptional conditions. It was a memory of an older and a healthier world, a scene impossible out of Ireland. Into the philosophy of the fact we need not enter; but here are three conflicting theories proposing to account for it. Philosopher number one alleges it as a proof of barbarism; number two traces it to the fact that the Irish are naturally the most virtuous people on the face of the earth; number three attributes it to the influence of the confessional—oblivious for the moment of the history of that institution in continental countries, and the moral condition of the countries where it has flourished longest.

As The O'Banagher entered, a pair of dancers occupied the barn door, dancing a jig to a tune and with an amount of action which would surprise the agile young persons who nightly illustrate the works of burlesque writers. The blind fiddler, drawing inspiration from the sound of the feet, waxed more fast and furious; the lookers-on shouted loud encouragement—till at last one of the two succumbed through sheer exhaustion. Then the fiddle ceased, and cheers went up on high in honour of the victorious jigster. The whiskey bottle went round again and again, the bocough refreshing himself with copious gulps. The girls were kissed with fervour and frequency. The old people sat apart, and conversed in Irish about domestic affairs.

The O'Banagher's name and titles being by this time known to every one present, his graceful condescension became the subject of comment, not always whispered. When, furthermore, it transpired that all the liquor consumed was to be paid for out of his honour's private purse, the enthusiasm was boundless; and the boys determined to prove their appreciation of this act of generosity by taking the fullest advantage of it. When, furthermore, it became generally known that The O'Banagher had presented the bride with a five-pound Bank of Ireland note, all the women fell in love with him, and sang his praises with genuine feeling.

"Sure, he was a rale gentleman entirely."

"Musha, it's meself 'ud be willing to serve the likes of him."

"His sowl'll rest in glory for it, anyhow."

"Divil a bit av the likes av it I ever seen at all, at all."

"Isn't he the purty-lookin' gintleman, too, alana?"

These and such as these were the compliments that buzzed about The O'Banagher's ears, delighted to accept them. He was beginning to enter thoroughly into the scene now, and grew every moment more and more excited. The chorus of adulation reached its climax when his honour, divested of his spurs, approached Peggy, and asked her to dance a jig with him. She assented to his request, and he led her blushing to the barn door.

Never was witnessed such an outburst of enthusiasm. The occupants of the barn left their places by the walls to cluster round the interesting performers. If the whole House of Commons had been there at that moment, it wouldn't have mattered to The O'Banagher. It was a grand sight to see the little chieftain footing it with all the energy of a gay young peasant, bobbing up and down, rolling his head from side to side, now with his arms akimbo, now lifting them in the air, and cracking his fingers as if in jovial defiance of custom; now entwining his arm in that of his partner, and twirling round in the centre of the board; now taking his place at the end farthest from her, and bobbing madly up and down again—as the fiddler moved his bow with new energy, as the spectators shouted approval, as the women alternately laughed and cried with delight, as the very candles flickered with excitement. At last, thoroughly exhausted, the perspiration pouring down his face, the festive senator shouted to the blind orchestra to stop; and, kissing his fair partner, led her back to the astonished object of her affections.

At this juncture, while the shouts of admiration were ringing among the blackened rafters, occurred one of those painful scenes often witnessed at a wedding in the south of Ireland. The old woman with the fair young companion, who had silently followed the procession along the road, had been present during the whole evening, unnoticed by The O'Banagher. He had, indeed, observed the young girl dancing in a wild way when he first entered the barn—her light hair un-

fastened and flying behind her, and her shrill whoop ringing above the voices of the rest. He had not, however, identified her as the figure in the procession. At the moment, however, when he was restoring Peggy to the side of her husband, the old woman, leaving a dark corner at the extreme end of the barn, tottered up to the married couple, conducting her young protégée by the hand. When she stood before them, a dead silence fell upon the whole assembly. She threw her cloak from over her head with an intensely dramatic action. She was evidently of extreme age, but her face bore ineffaceable traces of early beauty. Her withered skin was white as snow, and her eye shone with a lustre that had something terrible in it. She threw her hands above her head, and began to utter with fierce volubility a torrent of Irish words.

Peggy hid her face in her husband's bosom, and sobbed piteously; while her husband hung his head, and assumed an expression of extreme sheepishness. The girl of the golden hair, holding the skirt of the speaker's dress, looked at the pair proudly and defiantly, out of eyes from which anger, pride, and excitement had dried up all the tears. At the same moment that the old woman commenced her effective tirade, the bocough, who had divested himself of neither rags nor wallets, took his place by the side of the bride, and holding his dirty hands over her head in an attitude of benediction, began muttering sentences with a volubility not inferior to that of the woman. The wild tones of the old woman rose higher and higher. The mutterings of the bocough became more vehement and less distinct. Pieces of money were meanwhile thrust into one of his open wallets, both by the bridegroom and the guests. Poor Peggy's cries sounded most piteously; and when, with a fierce concluding menace and a fiercer denunciatory gesture, the woman ceased, she shrieked out as if from a sudden pang of pain, and fell back fainting into her husband's arms. The woman then drew the cloak about her head, and kissing the forehead of the girl by her side, led her from the place with proud but faltering footsteps. The strange pair walked out into the night, and did not return. The bocough continued to mutter his benedictions over the senseless girl—strange blessings in that uncouth no-language known in Ireland as bog-Latin. Peggy at length revived, was kissed by her companions, and

was led away by her husband from the scene so suddenly rendered terrible to her. Then the dancing recommenced. Peace was restored. Hilarity became the order of the night.

A word of comment on the singular drama just enacted. Although virtuous attachments are—for reasons best known to philosophers—time-honoured institutions in the land, it cannot be affirmed that the Irish peasant, masculine gender, is the most constant of mortals. The reverse, indeed, is the case. Often untrue to his early love, and always influenced more or less by considerations of a pecuniary nature, he may justly be set down as fickle. He has frequently been known to throw over Molly, whose dowry consisted of a bed and a pig, for Peggy, who in addition to the bed and the pig had a couple of sovereigns in a stocking. The Irish girl, however, is not so fickle in her nature as the Irish boy. When she loves, she loves with all her heart; and once slighted, she never forgives. Unable, and often unwilling, to embrace the vulgar vengeance afforded by a court of law, she sets in motion a poetical revenge of her own, more satisfactory to her feelings than the monetary consolation accorded by a jury. She attends the wedding of the faithless swain—is present like a dark shadow all through the ceremony—dances like a wild thing at the party that closes the day witnessing the death of her love. Throughout the day she is accompanied by her oldest female relative—a grandmother, sometimes a great-grandmother, who, at a suitable moment, arises and curses the new-made bride with intense bitterness. Upon her, upon her husband, upon her children yet to be, upon her house and property, she calls upon high Heaven to send sickness and death, and blackness and destruction. At times these maledictions surge into the domain of absolute poetry; while at times they are but the feeble drivellings of an idiotic crone. But none dare interrupt the flow of malediction. Her words are sacred—standing as she does upon the confines of a spirit-world soon to be entered by her. She addresses herself to an imaginative and altogether superstitious audience. No denunciations of Oriental prophets and of ages gone by could have had a greater terror for their hearers than hers have, spoken before an intelligent peasantry at this advanced period of our planet's history.

But though those interested do not dare to interrupt the curses, they are permitted to adopt such steps as may divert them. To this end the bocough is employed, to utter blessings; and blessings from that estimable creature are sought and paid for. For every prophecy of shame and sorrow he presages honour and joy. Instead of sickness he gives health. For early death he promises long life. By this ceremony the sting is supposed to be effectually drawn from the horrible maledictions of the accusing crone.

This strange scene had a very depressing effect on the spirits of The O'Banagher. The departure of Peggy, too, he regarded as a decided affliction. True to his oratorical instincts, he could not think of leaving the barn without addressing a few observations to the boys. So he mounted a form, and made a little speech, humorously enjoining upon them the duty of matrimony, and requesting them, in conclusion, to join him in drinking the health of the bride and bridegroom. This exercise occupied some time, as the bottles and glasses present were not equal in number to the mouths; but it was at last satisfactorily accomplished. Then one of the boys, mounting another form, called lustily for "Three cheers for The O'Banagher." Three resounding cheers were given. The chieftain bowed to his friends, shouted "Good night!" and, followed by Mrs. Connor, stumbled out into the starlight, leaving the boys to their devices.

Now it was clearly impossible for his honour to return that night to Castle Banagher, or even to Ballymarun. Fin MacCool couldn't be moved for a day at least. There was no other horse in the place. Besides, The O'Banagher didn't know the way. But Bianconi's car passed the door in the morning, and went very near Ballymarun, if his honour would only wait. Well, his honour determined that he *would* wait. Mrs. Connor's bed-rooms—the good woman explained—were by no means the sort of apartments she'd think of allowing his honour to sleep in. But she'd fix him up a bed in the kitchen behind the clothes-horse, where his honour would be quite snug and private. The bed was duly made—a blazing fire lighted in the grate—the key of the kitchen handed to his honour.

Mrs. Connor withdrew. The O'Banagher,

thoroughly done up, divested himself of some of his upper garments, dived behind the clothes-horse, threw himself on to the bed, and in five minutes was fast asleep.

THE CASUAL OBSERVER.

"OSSY."

TATTERSALL'S, sir? Keep straight on, sir, right past the two big 'ouses at Halberd-gate; and then, when yer comes to the kebstand, bear to the left, and you'll see the gates standing right afore yer."

I followed my instructions, and bearing to the left, became aware of the gates right "afore" me. There was no mistake about them, for there was too "ossy" a surrounding for the place to be any other than the one I sought. A mail phaeton, very loud in colour, stood close by; in it was a lady who looked blasé and fast. I stared at her—rudely, I'm afraid: it is my habit, as a Casual Observer. She stared at me—rudely, I'm certain—through a very large eye-glass. Her hair was very yellow, which it would not have been but for the colouring matter laid on; and her skin would have been very yellow but for the colouring matter laid on in pink and white. A pair of spanking tits—that is the right term here—were harnessed gaily to the phaeton, and they amused themselves by very impatiently nodding their heads up and down, and shaking them at a tightly breeched and belted little groom, who stood right before them, what time they seemed to be chewing soap after the fashion of epileptic impostors, and flinging the suddy foam in all directions over their own coats and the glossy habiliments of the tiger.

Beyond the tiger and his charge, a padgroom sat in charge of a couple of saddle horses; close by, a Hansom cabby leaned over the roof of his cab, with a straw in his mouth, and read earnestly from the copy of a sporting paper which he had spread open before him. Farther on were a couple more of his kidney, discussing some late event, and more than once giving an eye to a dashing chocolate and red drag, with its four chestnuts and neat grooms, waiting patiently for their master within.

This was Tattersall's, sure enough; though I had been in doubt, for my recollections of Tattersall's had been of a place at Hyde Park Corner, down Grosvenor-place a little way, and then off behind St. George's

Hospital. Tattersall's took it into its head to move, or had to move, and the result was that it fixed the pegs of its tent down here by Knightsbridge-green, and a sale was on—"this day."

'You are quite welcome there if you will walk into the clean, red-sanded courtyard, with doors round, every one of which you could take your oath led into a stable, without having the fact forced upon you through every sense, as you see wisps of straw, smell ammonia, hear the rattle of hoofs and head-stalls, taste the horsey atmosphere, and feel disposed to button up your pockets tightly, only there are no buttons.

"Who'll say a hundred guineas for this horse?" exclaims a voice, which comes from a corner where there is a rostrum, dominating a horse held by a helper and surrounded by a group—a very peculiar-looking group, by the way. The voice is that of the auctioneer, who stands with what looks like a black drumstick in his hand. He is florid, smart, and sports a choice rosebud in his button-hole. He does not look horsey, but decidedly shrewd. There is the horsey look, though, amongst his audience, as well as that of the calm, well-dressed patrician. Looking right and left, there are men with their pursuit written plainly upon their exterior. Here is the gentleman with his legs in tight "check," and coat of Oxford mixture without a wrinkle, bird's-eye neckerchief and fox-tusk pin; his hat is glossy and narrow of brim, and you may see him any morning in the park exercising a high stepper, whose price is of three figures.

Rubbing shoulders with this last is a seedy individual who stands, as well as walks, with a slouch; his hat is indescribable, he chews a piece of straw, and if he is not to be met at every low horse fair in England the fault is not his. Stud-groom is the next, with well-cut breeches, natty boots, and a cane to tap the latter very frequently. Pad-groom beside him, out of livery, and indulging in a roll of something that looks like a table cloth round his neck.

A few steps farther and there is the sleeve-waistcoated helper, with breeches and gaiters, cap slouched over his ears, and his hands making determined efforts to get to the very bottoms of his pockets, even at the expense of a stoop of the shoulders. There is a keen, eager, not to say knowing look on every face: to some it is natural, to others the result of practice; and, again, to others,

the gentlemanly portion of the audience, it is forced for the day by the knowledge that they are amongst cutting blades, and that there is danger in horse-dealing for the unwary.

But to business. The voice cries again—"Who'll say a hundred guineas for this horse?"

No one, apparently, and no wonder, for the animal looks "screwish;" his muscles stand out too prominently, and there is such a very small amount of difficulty in counting his ribs, that it is impossible to avoid thinking of the Hansom cabs used for night work. No one will say a hundred guineas, so the auctioneer proceeds:—

"Eighty? Sixty? Fifty? Forty? Thirty? Twenty-five?"

Rather an extensive descent from the hundred guineas; but if the mountain will not go to Mahomet, Mahomet must go to the mountain; so coming down to the quarter—twenty-five—some one looks at the auctioneer, and gives just one twitch of a muscle at the corner of his mouth. The man of the hammer—may be it is Tattersall himself—understands the motion, takes it as a bid, and acts accordingly. On the instant he gives a signal from the private code in use at the yard to the helper, who holds the slave on four legs; there is a shout from a policeman, "Stand back, there!" and the horse is trotted along the side of the court and back again, when another guinea is bid, and then another, till the black drumstick which represents a hammer falls, and the horse is sold.

Away goes the horse to a different stable to that from which it was brought; and the groom leads up to the rostrum another animal, which the catalogue says is "Duchess, daughter of Hokey Pokey and Bayadere;" a good hack and hunter, and a good fencer, quiet to ride, has been ridden by a lady, and hunted with the Quorn and Mr. Meynell Ingram's hounds.

"Who'll throw in a bid for the Duchess?" says the auctioneer, as she is led up to stand beside the wall, which shows dints and chips every here and there, looking strikingly like marks made by kicking hoofs. And admirably contrived to show off the shape of a horse is the attitude in which the practised auctioneer's aid, after leading the animal to the rostrum, contrives to put it—with head erect, limbs extended, but well braced, and every muscle looking taut, springy, and

as if, held in abeyance, there was so much animal elasticity waiting for a touch to spring into life.

"Now then," cries the auctioneer again, "who'll throw in a bid for the Duchess?"

But people are very chary about "throwing in a bid," for the Duchess is an old beauty, very scraggy about the neck and shoulders, very glossy and carefully got up, certainly; but that is an unpleasant smile which displays yellow teeth, and it is only on account of her aristocratic descent, and the blue blood of the Hokey Pokeys, that she gets knocked down for twenty-nine guineas—giving a violent start when the hammer falls, that looks as artificial as her manner. She walks off with mincing movement, and a voice behind growls out huskily,

"Dear at thirty bob."

There is a little excitement now, and a better class of buyers make their way towards the auctioneer, for the next lots are nine hunters, the property of a nobleman. They have been well known with the Pytchley hounds, and regularly hunted up to the time of sale. There are gentlemen here now ready to bid, and they scan the points of every horse eagerly, but somehow there are faults known only to the *cognoscenti*, for, though the seller proposes a hundred guineas for the first bid, he has to come down to twenty before he gets a rise at the verbal flies he throws amongst the keen trout gathered around.

Five horses are sold, not one of which reaches forty guineas in price; but now comes one which carries a character in its fiery eye, springy elastic tread, half-defiant look, and the loud whinnying neigh. There is no trace here of anything but excellent grooming, for her skin is like satin, through which shows a network of veins. No ancient markings on the teeth, no brand of firing on the legs. Youthful, bright, and untroubled by equine cares, that little mare stands playfully by the rostrum, answering each bid with a prick of her mobile ears.

A murmur runs through the group, and people press closer. One sharp-eyed man passes his hand carefully down the beautiful creature's shins—

"Tut—tut—tut! that's wrong. Not "ossy" at all. What ought one to call a horse's legs? Certainly not "shins." Your humble servant knows that he is wrong, but he dare not say hocks, fetlocks, nor pasterns, for fear of making matters worse. He knows,

however, that the knowing one is feeling for splints or spavins; so he fires off this bit of inky knowledge to hide his confusion, and shuffles off, like a literary octopus, under the cloud he has evolved.

Sixty guineas are offered at once—seventy—eighty; then there is a pause, and the mare which "carried a lady to hounds last season" is run down the court once more and back, to display her distending nostrils, arched neck, gracefully-shaped pasterns, and flowing tail. She is a beauty, and she knows it, coming bridling back to the stand, but only to rub her velvet nose against the groom's whip-armed hand, as if playfully saying, "You'd never have the heart to use that on me!" Eighty-five guineas are bid the next minute, and then there is a brisk competition, and Jenny is knocked down for a hundred guineas. "And cheap, too," is the comment.

Now come other lots—elderly animals that are at enmity with the genus homo. They know what whips are, and wince, and shrink, and bound away. One sees an imaginary stable-fork shaft in every hand that approaches; another lays down his ears and bares his teeth; while others come up surly and sullen, ready to do as much work as is forced out of them, and to eat as much as possible while they exist. You can see it all written in their leering eyes, and long, lank sides. Here is one which looks like an animated corn-bin covered with the skin of a horse; and his successor has a jaw and development of facial muscle that bid fair to enable him to eat for ever, and then draw a long breath and begin again. Well, horses don't have much pleasure in this life, save that of eating; and if that prove to be only chaff, wretched is their lot indeed.

Temper has, of course, a wonderful deal to do with the price fetched. An ill-tempered looking but handsome beast goes for twenty-five guineas, while a free, mild-faced, gentle nag makes exactly double; and, directly after, Jolly Sailor, who has quite a pedigree, runs up to seventy guineas. Colour, too, has no little to do with price. One nag, of a pepper and salt hue, finds little favour. The favourites are the bright bays and chestnuts; and if they have black legs, they signify guineas in the seller's pocket.

The sale goes briskly on, for there are over a hundred horses—many of good name

and pedigree; but the prices fetched are not high, one very handsome pair of carriage horses going for eighty-five guineas. Much of this is, of course, due to the speculative element there is in buying a horse by auction. It may turn out a bargain, and be, as the auctioneer said of several, "given away" for a few pounds; but, on the other hand, there have been instances of horses thus bought being dear at any price.

Whish! Ah, that one will not fetch much. His legs seem to be thrown out four ways at once, and the crowd scatters to avoid the iron heels of a great high weedy beast, all bones, and legs, and ribs—a brute, something like Orpheus C. Kerr's mahogany clothes-horse, of Gothic build. But this has good birth of which to boast; he is the property of a lord, is a good fencer—"Twenty-nine guineas; all done?" rap! The black drumstick falls, and the "ossy" men gather round the beast like flies, to canvass the speculation of one of their set.

The "ossy" men are apparently satisfied, for they are jocund—that is to say, as near to jocundity as it is possible for men of their class to look. "Ossy" men don't often smile, they have a tendency to sadness. This is evidently due to the fact of their always having the muscles of the jaws in a state of tension, as they chew a straw, a strand of hay, a single oat; or, failing these, one end of their wisp-like neckerchief.

It is not a pleasant subject; but seeing this buying and selling of the equine race reminds me of the horse I bought—years ago now, but the remembrance is as fresh as it was then. That horse—cob I should say—was wanted for the four-wheeler; and distrusting others' advice—people will be so knowing about horses—I bought it myself of a dealer. I thought it certainly very nice-looking, and it possessed every quality that a cob should have—at least, so the dealer said. It was quiet to ride and drive—a good roadster—was rising seven—hardy as a Welsh pony—and given away to me at my own price.

What price? What did I give for that cob? No, never! You may put me on the rack—torture me—set Hawkins or Kenealy to worry me for a week, and seek to trap me into telling what I gave; but I'll keep that a secret, to be known by no man.

But I will confess about the cob. His colour came off in the stable; one leg somehow turned out to be shorter than the

others, when he was properly shod; and if you could drive him by a cow, a pig, a duck, a heap of road scrapings, a barrow, a child's perambulator, a white gate, a black dog, or a pump, you are cleverer than I. None of our family ever could, halt though he was; and as the whole of the above objects abounded in our neighbourhood, driving was rather an irksome task.

I sold that beast as soon as I could find any one to buy, and what I sold him for is another secret never to be divulged. He was a beast indeed, and came down in life; for the last time I saw him, he was drawing a sweep's cart, and as I passed he leered at me in a revolting manner, showing his teeth in a wicked grin, as if rejoicing at the way in which I had been taken in.

Yes, I sold that cob; and I would have sent him to Tattersall's, but I did not dare. Judging from what I have seen, I think I was right; for though a few of the bays sold were rather—rather let us say they were so incomparably superior to our cob, that—

But there, let it pass—the subject is painful; and we are at the gates, where a very tightly trousered gentleman is mounting into the mail phaeton, just as that beflowered "swell" climbs to the box of the drag; and tst! away they go along Knightsbridge, with the grooms stepping up behind, the destination probably being the Row.

HUMAN SACRIFICE.

HUMAN sacrifice was instituted by the people of Mexico during the fourteenth century, and from being quite a rare rite, with the growth of their civilization increased until the activity reached to a fearful height. Their custom was to save some fine young man—generally an enemy taken in battle; and then, for the space of a whole year, he was treated with every respect and dignity; rich foods, flowers, and dress were lavished upon him; four beautiful maidens were selected to be the companions of his captivity; music, feasting, and visiting at the abodes of the principal Aztec nobles passed his time away. Attended by a courtly train upon passing through the streets, deferred to and regaled with incense, he was treated almost with the worship that would have been accorded to that one of their gods whom for the time being he was supposed to personate.

But the year of pleasure soon drew to a

close; and doubtless, not being ignorant of the fate in store for him, this knowledge must often have embittered the gayest festivals—the richest banquets. Devoted to the sacrifice, there was no escape for the captive; and on the expiration of the time he was denuded of all his gay trappings, seized upon by the priests, and conveyed across the lake to an island, where, about a league from the city, rose towering up one of those huge pyramids, standing to this day as monuments of the industry and civilization of these people. The ascent to the flat top of the pyramidal temple was by a slowly ascending flight of steps, contrived so that a procession during one of the great religious feasts might be seen from all parts of the city, winding up to where the high priests were standing by the sacrificial altar—these fearful rites being all performed in the open air. The scene was made imposing, and always viewed by the assembled thousands of the populous city, who watched with breathless excitement and a feeling of savage awe the ascent of the victim to where he was received by six priests, weird and strange-looking, with their sable pictured robes, and long, flowing, matted, snaky hair. By them was the stone of sacrifice, a large block of jasper, slightly rounded at the top; and upon this, breast uppermost, the victim was stretched by five of the priests—one holding his head, the other four his limbs; while, armed with a knife of obsidian—a volcanic glass—the chief priest cut open the breast of the sacrifice, tore out his heart, held it up towards the sun, and then threw it at the feet of the idol to whom the temple was devoted.

The scene was awful and impressive, and viewed in silence by the assembled multitude, ready to throw themselves down in adoration of their savage deity, as this last act of horror was performed by the priest of the bloody rite. But not only were men offered up, for there were instances of the other sex being sometimes selected for the abominable offerings; and at times, when rain refused to visit the earth, the great god Tlaloe had to be appeased or supplicated by the offering up of beautiful infants, which were borne in festal robes in priestly processions, their pitiful wailings being drowned by the chants of those who formed the train. The sacrifices were at times appalling in their number, at great feasts or dedications of temples. For such occasions the pri-

soners of their many petty wars would be reserved, perhaps for years, and then brought from all parts to the capital, and led in long processions to the great temple.

At the dedication of the temple of one deity, the ceremony lasted for days, and 70,000 victims are said to have perished; and this astonishing computation is attested by the most trustworthy writers. It seems almost impossible, but of the tremendous extent of human sacrifice there can be no doubt, since the skulls of the victims were invariably saved; and the followers of Cortés, the conqueror, give evidence of having, in one religious building alone, counted 136,000 of these grim relics of mortality. The most moderate computations by authors place the yearly number of victims offered up in the country at 20,000—some placing the average at more than double. The conquerors might well be overcome with horror at the discoveries they daily made, and the atrocities of this nature which they witnessed, eagerly seizing opportunities for casting down the altars, and overturning the images of the deities presiding over this sanguinary religion—one whose rites and ceremonies seemed endless, and were all celebrated with a wealth of pomp that was extreme.

Great as was the Aztec civilization, there seems mingled with it the very extreme of horror and barbarity; for as if the fearful sacrifice was not sufficient, the day of offering was made one of banqueting—feasting of the most loathsome nature. For at the conclusion of the priest's office, the captive's body was delivered to the warrior who had taken him in battle; then, handed over to his slaves, the body was dressed in epicurean fashion, and a banquet given by the warrior to his friends, who feasted upon the captive at a table spread with costly viands, fruits, and the richest of beverages. No savage repast this, but a grand banquet, attended by a people in other respects one of the most civilized in the world. The historian may well say—"Surely, never were refinement and the extreme of barbarism brought so closely into contact with each other!"

TABLE TALK.

THE spiritualism question is getting more widely discussed every day, and certainly wondrous tales are told. Are we to believe, or look upon those who tell of

matters strange as either dupes or knaves? It may be that it would be wise to wait awhile, until the Casual Observer, now busily at work, has published in these columns a series of his observations upon the matter, taken from the firm standpoint of a man prepared to investigate every phase with keen business eyes—one too sceptical to be easily deluded, too eager to acknowledge scientific truth, to treat all he sees as food for the mocker. We look forward to the acquisition of many new facts, though it may be too much to anticipate a perfect elucidation of the whole affair.

MARSHAL BAZAINE is now a prisoner—consigned, it is believed, to the very cell that held for near upon forty years that celebrated historical mystery, the Man with the Iron Mask. Here is the description of the room:—"It is a lofty apartment, and not nearly so uncomfortable as might be expected; for it contains a fireplace and a large window, the latter grated, however, with three strong iron bars. The prisoner has been allowed a servant, a medical man when necessary, and a priest, for whom an altar has been erected, according to some accounts, at the end of the narrow passage from which the cell opens." There is enough here to make it bearable, but still it is a prison; and the recollection of an inmate whose stay was for forty years is enough to discourage the stoutest heart. Still the Marshal has this for his comfort—the France of to-day differs from that of the time of Louis XIV., inasmuch as it is strongly leavened by what is known as change.

SPEAKING OF THE coloured folk on the Gold Coast, a war correspondent says:—"Their tint, by the way, is extraordinarily diverse, varying from the deepest, glossiest black to a light brown. I speak of negroes pure-blooded, of course; the mulatto colour is unmistakable. In Dunquah Camp we have even two specimens of red-headed natives, both girls; and at Mansu, so a doctor tells me, I shall find a man with a red beard, quite hale and intelligent too—as intelligence goes in Africa. I know a child, also, who has grey eyes, extraordinarily piquant and roguish, in his jetty face. None of these anomalies have the slightest connection with the deformity called albino. Albinos, too, are invariably idiotic in the

Tropics, so far as my experience goes, and I have seen many in the East, in tropical America, and here."

HERE IS A SKETCH of the Gold Coast vegetation:—"There are, indeed, no clearings, except around the frequent piles of ruin, but from the top of many a rise we could look down upon the most luxuriant valleys—a mass of tree-tops, closely pressed together, surmounted by the giants of the forest. Though the earth is little encumbered by brush, the crush of foliage is astonishing when looked at from above. Lianas and parasites, many of them in blossom, bind all the mass together, and wave their arms triumphantly above the highest bough. I saw trees loftier than our tallest poplars not twelve inches in diameter at base, so eagerly have they struggled upwards to the sunshine. High above all towered the cotton trees, monsters of the forest, easy to be seen by their smooth trunks, scarce buttressed through supporting such mighty boughs 150 feet above the earth, that nature fears no hurricane in this climate."

EVER SINCE their discovery, the bones of the Dodo have been bones of contention. They have been weighed, measured, built-up, reconstructed, and their original owner made to represent a fat old washerwoman of a bird, with a leering, intoxicated look that must have been extremely disgusting to any descendant variety or allied species of the said-to-be-extinct feathered biped. At last we have an announcement that the Dodo is not extinct; more, that a living specimen has been captured. Our savans were all agog, and expectation was at the highest pitch, when down comes Professor Owen with a wet blanket, and declares that the supposed Dodo is but a Dodlet—a degenerate descendant, only about one-sixth the size. "'Tis true, 'tis pity; and pity 'tis, 'tis true." Mem. for the future: Always take strange poultry with a pinch of salt.

Communications to the Editor should be addressed to the Office, 19, Tavistock-street, Covent-garden, W. C. Contributions should be legibly written, and only on one side of each leaf.

Terms of Subscription for ONCE A WEEK, free by post:—Weekly Numbers for Six Months, 5s. 5d.; Monthly Parts, 5s. 8d.

ONCE A WEEK

NEW SERIES.

No. 316.

January 17, 1874.

Price 2d.

JACK'S SISTER; OR, WOMANLY PAST QUESTION.

CHAPTER V.
MERLE RUNS AWAY.



HE boy must be mad."

"So I say, John. Indeed, it is so perfectly absurd, that if it were not the height of ungrateful impertinence as well, I should not have troubled you on the subject."

It was nearly six months after Mrs. Ley-

burn's death, and the two people sitting in her husband's study were that gentleman himself and Aunt Jane; who, having found the old acquaintances and friendly sociability of her early home more agreeable, if less dignified, than the aristocratic seclusion of Leyburn Hall, had prolonged her visit from week to week—always under protest, as it were; and she told her friends she could not find it in her heart to leave poor John's children to the care of any one but a woman exceptionally refined yet housewifely, firm yet amiable, dignified yet modest—in fact, a phoenix.

And phoenixes are scarce.

Said Clifton to Jack, pretty well every day—

"Have you got a governess for Enid yet at your house?"

Said Jack to Clifton—

"Not we; aunt's too fond of us to take any of those who apply. I don't believe she'll ever go—ugh!"

So much for the ingratitude of children.

It was, however, a worse example of the same vice which was now engaging the attention of Mr. and Miss Leyburn. No less than this—Merle, when aggravated by Aunt Jane, was in the frequent habit of bursting out into violent weeping and reproaches, always ending by a threat of running away.

"The mere idea of such a thing, when he is only kept by you out of charity!" cried Miss Leyburn, indignantly.

"I beg your pardon," said her brother; "out of respect and affection for my wife's wishes."

Miss Leyburn bit her lips, and was silent.

As she told her friends, "She had never had any patience with Mrs. John's vagaries."

"Well, but brother," she resumed, "surely it is not your wish that, whenever corrected or checked in the smallest degree, Merle should call me names, and threaten to run away and starve, and I don't know what."

"Most certainly not."

"I have punished him already for it several times, and even locked him up lest he should do so; but it is very unpleasant. And Enid makes him worse by crying and coaxing him to be patient and good, as if he were conferring a great favour on the family by staying here. That child really makes herself quite ridiculous over her cousin, and obliges me to be severe with her on the subject."

Mr. Leyburn's lips suddenly tightened with the remembrance of his wife's death-bed trust.

"Oblige me by not being more severe with Enid than you can help," he said, drily.

"She is a very good child, and has been a great comfort to her mother and me."

"Oh! certainly, John," in an offended tone; "just as you like. I might have known you would take the children's parts against me; especially as I am giving up my home comforts and everything, even running the risk of offending my father, in order to do my duty to your family. But it is always the way. One sacrifices everything—*everything* for others; and does not get even thanks for it."

Aunt Jane began to weep.

"That is nonsense, Jane," said Mr. Leyburn, equably, he being too well used of old to these outbreaks of self-commiseration and injured feeling for any sensation but a mild desire to return to his employment. "I am much obliged to you for coming here, I am sure; and it's very kind of you to look after the house and poor Mary's children; but if you have the least desire to return to the Hall, I'll go up to London, and get a suitable person to manage things, to-morrow; and as to Merle, you've just gone the right way to encourage him in his idiocy."

"What am I to do, then, John, when he threatens to run away?" Aunt Jane asked, ignoring the "ungracious bear's threat," as she mentally termed her brother's speech.

"Let him! Tell him to go by all means, if he likes it better than staying here; and tell him he had better take his overcoat, as the weather is still rather cold. He'll not go, my dear, you'll see. Make a martyr of a boy, and he takes a pride in heroics. Turn them into ridicule, and you'll soon cure him."

Mr. Leyburn was a man of shrewd sense, and would have made a useful legislator in the middle ages. His sister jumped at the idea, and to his great relief departed with a smile. Two days later, when Enid came back with nurse from spending the morning with a little friend, the servant who opened the door greeted her with—

"Have you met Master Merle, miss?"

"No," said Enid. "Why?"

"Master Jack has just come home, and says he has not been at afternoon school; and we can't find him nowhere, miss."

"Can't find him, Jane? Why, Merle, Merle! Oh, auntie, do you know where Merle is?"

Enid was flying upstairs when she met that lady, whose flushed and embarrassed

expression of countenance attracted her attention.

"No, indeed, Enid, I do not," she answered, sharply; "but I do know that when he comes back I shall make your father punish him severely for upsetting the whole house in this way. I had occasion to correct him for leaving his things about, before dinner; and he flew into one of his sudden rages, and declared he would run away."

"And you? What did you do, aunt?" Enid asked, her great eyes fixed eagerly on Miss Leyburn's face.

"My dear, do not speak in that tone. It is very unbecoming in little girls to cross-question their elders. I did as your papa desired I should, and told him to run away if he liked—that he might please himself in that matter."

"Oh, auntie! but he didn't—surely he didn't, really?" Enid cried, in great distress.

"Well, my dear, I think he did," replied her aunt, "for Jack says he has **not been** at school, and we cannot find him **anywhere**; therefore, if he is not merely playing **truant**, I think he must have run away."

And so indeed he had.

Miss Leyburn, however, had done less than justice to her own powers of eloquence in the report of her speech to Merle: she having not merely confined herself to bidding him run away if he liked, but having rather goaded and incited him to that measure by a succession of small sneers and taunts, implying disbelief of his possessing the requisite courage, and very hearty assurances that no one would miss him if he did go, but would feel rather relieved at the absence of so great a trouble and expense. All of which, repeated ad infinitum, with a true woman's skill in tormenting the wrongly called stronger sex, so worked upon Merle's irritable and sensitive disposition, that when at last he rushed out of the room in a tempest of rage, he felt bound in honour to carry out his threat of running away immediately. Which he did.

Enid was away. Jack had marched off to school five minutes before, simply hollering to him to make haste or he would be late. There was no one to say a word of soothing or counsel; and so the boy coolly walked out of the house, and out of the town too, without a finger being lifted to stay him. His anger carried him along briskly at first; and the resolution not to

allow himself to be carried back at any peril made him careful to avoid passing the bank, or any of the shops at which the family dealt, and to wind in and out, and dodge along the narrowest streets in his passage through the town, with a caution which was absolutely ludicrous, when it is considered that, in all probability, no one would have taken the slightest notice of him, whether seen or not. Even when he got into the fields, he was careful to skirt along under hedges; and once or twice went so far as to sit down in a dry ditch, to avoid being seen by a group of children or a passing labourer.

It was nearly two hours before he struck the river about three miles below Marsh-ton Fallows; and as he came out under the willows on the towing-path, and looked about him, he became aware that his appetite was crying out loudly for dinner. Unfortunately for Merle, the quarrel with Aunt Jane had begun almost immediately after the meal was set on the table; and the young gentleman, whose hunger was easily driven away by any excitement, had sat through dinner in a sulky abstinence, tasting nothing, and answering Miss Leyburn's inuendoes about the expenses of his keep by an indignant asseveration that he never would eat another morsel where she presided. He regretted bitterly now that he had not uttered his threat after instead of before dinner, and felt resentful with Jack for not having employed a softer persuasion than the curt "Don't be a fool, Merle," spoken with a mouthful of beefsteak pie, and a heaped-up plate of the same savoury edible before him. From eight a.m. to three p.m. is quite sufficient for a schoolboy to get hungry in, especially when the time has been spent in study, football, and a three or four mile walk. Needs must, however, when some one drives; and, stoically disregarding his increasing hunger, Merle trudged on manfully.

So far, the morning had been fine and sunny, though not too warm; but for some minutes Merle had felt it perceptibly cooler, and now, all of a sudden, the rain came down in torrents, penetrating the young foliage of the nearest willow under which he took refuge, and wetting him through in two minutes as completely as though he had been in a bath. Poor Merle did not like this at all; and failing other consolation, took refuge in "tears, idle tears." Indeed,

had it not been for Aunt Jane and the dread of her tongue, he would have retraced his steps homewards without waiting for the formality of being brought back; but, as things were, that was out of the question, and he found himself envying the frogs as they croaked a joyous chorus among the glistening dock leaves under the weedy river bank, and feeling positively angry with the snail on the willow tree's trunk, who, at the first sign of bad weather, retired into his shell with cheerful promptitude, and remained there dry and snug, while the rain pattered down on the roof of his habitation, and ran in shining little streamlets over the mossy channels in the gnarled old trunk.

"Selfish, slimy beast!" muttered the young moralist in very natural disgust; and put an effectual stop to that animal's ungenerous precaution by knocking it down and crushing it under his boot heel. The frogs, however, still continued their triumphant croaking, and little cold drops trickled off the brim of his hat and ran down his spine in anything but an agreeable fashion. He felt more unhappy than ever.

Presently the rain ceased, and the sun came out brightly again, with all the proverbial inconstancy of April weather. Whereupon Merle emerged from under the willow tree, which was distilling diamond showers from every leaf and twig, and ran along the towing-path, trying to warm himself, and looking out everywhere for a cottage where he could get something to eat; till, espying a column of light grey smoke, rising over a column of trees at the farther end of a long meadow, and rightly judging that where smoke was there a house must be also, he clambered over the stile, and began to cut across the field without further delay. The grass was wetter than he had thought: so full of moisture that it soaked through his boots and made him cough before he had gone half a dozen yards; and though schoolboys in general are not given to caring about that sort of thing, Merle had too many reminiscences of weary weeks of mustard plaster and gargle to be indifferent on the subject, and accordingly hopped along on the points of his toes; picking out the driest spots, and never raising his eyes from the ground, until suddenly startled half out of his senses by something like a small earthquake and a huge snort exactly in front of him; and, leaping back, found himself confronted by a very truculent-looking young

bull, who looked him full in the face, and raised a guttural remonstrance at being disturbed so rudely from his post-prandial slumber.

Now, if there was one thing which Merle dreaded more than another, it was any animal of the bovine species. The tamest old cow that ever dozed over the milk pail was a subject of unconfessed terror to Master Kinnardson; and, on the present occasion, fear so took possession of his soul that, giving himself up for lost, he uttered one wild shriek, and sped across the meadow as fast as his legs would carry him—a proceeding which the bull, being of a lively turn of mind, and as yet unsubdued by care or slaughter-house meditations, naturally took as a challenge to a race, and cantered after him as briskly as possible. The thud, thud of his heavy hoofs on the wet turf soon gained on Merle, and gave the boy wings. He flew along like the wind, and making straight at a small break in the hedge, which he had fortunately espied before his fright, flung himself bodily through it, just as Toro's round black eyes were within six inches of the seat of Master Kinnardson's knickerbockers.

Crash! Thump!

"Am I dead?" thought Merle, when he had recovered consciousness enough to think anything. "No, I don't *think* I am—I ache all over too much. Are my limbs broken? I don't know; I can move them all. Did the bull toss me? I'm not sure. All I know is that I'm lying on a heap of wet brushwood and weeds, at the bottom of a ditch; and as I suppose that the bull is waiting to gore me again at the top, I think I had better stay there."

And he did so.

Nearly ten minutes passed before the disagreeable sensation of wet soaking into every pore of his skin, of a body full of aches, and a mouth full of mud, gave Merle courage to peep cautiously through the grass and leaves which closed over his head—a survey which resulted in the discovery that he was lying at the bottom of a broad, deep ditch on the farther side of the hedge, and that his enemy was nowhere in sight. Re-assured on this point, though still remembering the axiom that prudence is the better part of valour, he now crept along the ditch for about twenty yards, and then crawled out of it—a work of some difficulty, owing to the muddy and slippery state of the bank,

and the stiffness of his own limbs. Once on terra firma, however, he very nearly had a fresh fit on perceiving the state that he was in, being coated with mud from head to foot as completely as though he had been ordered a bath in that grey and slimy condiment by some Egyptian doctor; while, in addition to this, his hands were covered with scratches, and several drops of blood oozing from his nose were rapidly mingling with the dirt upon his face.

The snail was avenged! Let us hope that its ghost derived comfort from the spectacle of so speedy a Nemesis.

The cottage, the smoke from whose chimney Merle had seen, was within a few yards of him now; but how to present himself in this plight, and escape the risk of suspicion and detainment, he knew not. And determining to reconnoitre, at all events, before attempting such a measure, he made his way across a moist bit of green, where on sundry intersecting lines and poles clothes were hanging out to dry, and where—while ducking his head to avoid the unceremonious slaps of wet linen on his dirty face—he managed to give himself more than one furtive scrub, with more improvement to his own appearance than to the newly washed under-linen of the unfortunate cottagers.

Passing these convenient groves, Merle found himself close to a rough paling, fenced within by untidy-looking gooseberry bushes, bearing early fruit in the shape of sundry pairs of socks and stockings, much out of repair in the heels and toes; and behind which a woman was sitting on an inverted tub, skinning rabbits.

Not a pleasant-looking woman at all, Merle thought. Hard-featured, with a red, scraped skin, as if she were in the habit of scrubbing the front doorstep with her face; with a bristly mole on one side of her large, bony nose, and a faded lilac sun bonnet perched hindpart forwards on the top of her head; nothing that could be thought inviting or motherly in her whole appearance; and the cold-blooded manner in which she turned the skin back off poor bunny's loins, and then, tearing it ruthlessly from him, flung it into a basket at her side, quite made Merle shiver. Still, he could not bring himself to retreat, but remained staring at her with a sort of bird and rattle-snake fascination, until he saw her about to repeat the operation upon a second victim,

when poor Merle's courage gave way at once, and round he turned, and scampered off as fast as his legs could carry him.

On, on again, with the cold wind in his face, with weary limbs, and the sun behind a cloud, the boy trudged, trying to beat down hunger and fatigue by repeating again and again, "She said I was a burden to them, and I'll never go back to any house where she is—pig, pig!" which latter ejaculation appeared to afford him some comfort; for he went on more freely after giving vent to it, though every step passed over served to make him hate Aunt Jane more, and to long for Enid with an intensity which would have gratified that anxious little maiden's loving heart, could she have known it. If Enid had been with him, walking at his side, and holding his hand, he could have borne much greater disagreeables; but alone, and with evening closing in, his short-lived endurance flagged terribly, and he felt thankful when he saw the river shimmering greyly at the end of a long lane with hedges on either side; and still more thankful when, on reaching the towing-path, he found himself within fifty yards of one of the lock cottages. The mud had dried on him by now, and as he knew by the look of the place that he was seven or eight miles from home, he summoned courage to go up to the door, and seeing a comely-looking woman nursing her baby at the fire, to ask her civilly for a piece of bread.

"Come in," she said; and then uttered an exclamation—"Lawk-a-mercy! you be all a muck o' dirt and blood."

"I fell down," said Merle, glibly, having prepared a tale for the occasion. "I live at Babbicombe; and I've been over to Sedgely, and lost my way coming back. Can you give me a piece of bread, and let me sit down a bit? I'm very hungry, and I would like to rest before I go on. It isn't far to Babbicombe now, is it?"

"Far! Why, this here be Babbicombe Lock. You ought to know it, if you live there. I don't know your face, noither; an' seems I knows most o' gentry bidin' hereabouts. Whose little boy might 'ee be, master?"

"I'm—I'm Mr. Brown's son," Merle stammered, turning his face to the fire; while the woman, shifting her baby from her knee to one arm, opened the cupboard, and got down the bread and cheese. "We are new people here," he added,

not liking this questioning at all; "and—and I'm not a gentleman."

"I doubt you're not tellin' me the truth," said his hostess, gravely. "'Ee don't go fur to tell me you're a workin' man's lad. Howsumdover, sit 'ee down an' eat. I'm just a-goin' to speak to my old man out by yonder. Seems to me ye've been up to no good, little master; but sit 'ee down, sit 'ee down; there's nout need o' starvin' fur a' that."

Merle shook in his shoes. To be carried home ignominiously by the lock-keeper, and handed over, a miserable, mudstained culprit, to Aunt Jane, was the picture which rose immediately before his imagination. That was too dreadful, and to avoid it he must seize the opportunity of the woman's absence to escape as fast as might be. And yet to go hungry, with that nice, crusty loaf on the table! It was more than cruel. Merle would not have hesitated before a dozen more lies. He could not *steal*—that not being gentlemanly; and if he waited to cut the loaf as desired, the woman might return. An idea came into his head. Taking a shilling from his pocket, he flung it on the table, tucked the loaf under his arm, and was out of the house, and scudding across the road, while the dame was still talking to her husband at the back. Too shrewd, however, to keep along the towing-path, where he would be seen at once, he slipped down to the bank, and slunk along under shadow of the weeds and bushes—now in the water, and now out, till his path was barred by a fishing punt, moored to an elderberry branch, into which he crept; and, coiling his wet and aching limbs under a large piece of tarpaulin lying in the stern, composed himself to eat his bread with a ravenous appetite, which made the coarse cottage loaf taste sweeter than the richest cake at other times, and a heart which beat quicker at every sound from the bank above his head.

He must have fallen asleep here; for it was quite dark, and the stars were shining brightly, and making little sparks of silver in the liquid glass of the river, when he was startled by a shock which made the boat quiver under him; and immediately a heavy weight fell right on the top of his body, half crushing him, and making him shriek with pain and terror.

CHAPTER VI.

THE LOST SHEEP.

POOR little Enid remained staring at her aunt in mute consternation for nearly a minute after hearing of Merle's flight. It seemed indeed, to her too scrupulous little soul, as if it were the natural result of her having deserted her post of duty for even half a day; and the quick sequence of thought found its expression in her half-futtered sob—

"Oh! mother."

"Nonsense, Enid," said Aunt Jane, sharply. "Don't look like that. The boy will come running back for his tea in an hour or so; and your mother would have been the first to punish him for such conduct, I'm sure."

Enid shook her head. She had never seen her mother punish Merle in all her life; and she asked meekly how long he had been gone.

"Ever since dinner. Now, child, don't be silly and go worrying about what does not at all concern you. Take off your nice pelisse, and go and play in the garden; and remember, if you see him first, that I shall expect Merle to make me a full and proper apology when he returns, if he does not wish me to ask his uncle to flog him soundly."

So Aunt Jane, tolerably complacent in self-righteousness, though more uneasy at bottom than she cared to acknowledge; but Enid, though she obeyed the first order, was too unhappy to think of the second; and catching a glimpse, from the nursery window, of Jack standing in the poultry yard talking to Clifton Gore, she caught up her garden hat and ran down to join them: astonishing her brother exceedingly by seizing him by the arm and asking, with her eyes full of tears, if he thought Merle had really run away.

"Don't be a booby, Enid," said Jack, politely. "If he has, he'll soon come back again. Hi! chuck, chuck, chuck! Look at my bantam, Clif. Aint he a jolly little beggar?"

"But Jack, dear," pleaded his sister, persistent though rebuffed, "do you think he has? You were there, weren't you?"

"Well, aunt did her best to make him. I tell you what, Clif, she's aggravating enough sometimes to make a donkey dance. I just wish people wouldn't have more than one girl in a family."

"Why?"

"Because there'd be no maiden aunts."

"And suppose the one girl didn't marry, you goose?"

"She'd have to, in order to keep up the proper what-you-may-call-'em of population. Don't be an ignoramus, Clif."

"Your Aunt Jane had no sisters. There!"

"She? But no one but a-a-a ornithorhynchus would marry her. I say, Clif, don't you like bantams better than cochins? Father pays heaps of money for his cochins—great ugly brutes! Just look at them now. Here!—chuck, chuck."

"Don't cry, Enid," said Clifton, kindly, as he caught sight of the little girl's tearful eyes in turning round. "Merle will come back to tea. Jack says he had no dinner, and he'll be hungry, recollect. Why, I ran away when I was about six years old, because papa had my pony shot. It had been his, you know, when he was a boy, and was too old to care about living; but I wasn't up to that, and got into a great rage, and ran away."

"And were you brought back?"

"Not I. I came back just after dinner-time, and mamma had up dinner for me, and gave me cake and guava jelly as well. My goodness! didn't she kiss and cry over me, too!"

Enid shook her head again, not comforted even by this reminiscence, though it at once satisfied any anxiety Jack might have felt.

"Only Merle is so different from you, Clifton," she said, timidly. "He doesn't get over things—oh! for ever so long; and he has said several times that he would run away, because Aunt Jane wasn't kind to him. I told him he must not, for he would be sure to starve, not knowing any one to go to; but he said if he followed the river all the way he should get to London, and there he would earn his living quite easily by writing letters for servants and songs for the poor people to sing in the streets. Jack, I'm sure he is gone to do that, for he thought it all out, and said I could always send him money when he wanted it, and that I was to begin and save mine in case he should; but I have only threepence a week, you know, and I gave him sixpence for the ginger-beer woman yesterday, and I know he has spent that, and I don't think he has any of his own; and—oh, dear! oh, dear!

if he is out in all the rain we had just now, he will catch such a cold."

"Now don't you begin to howl, Enid," said Jack, interrupting this outpouring with brotherly sweetness. "This is all your own fault, and no one else's; isn't it, Clif? For if you'd gone and told me what the little scamp intended, instead of keeping it all to yourself and encouraging him, as you always do, I could have kept an eye on him. The idea of your letting him plan it all out this way! My, won't father be angry! It's well he's out dining at old Northcote's this evening."

"I tell you what, Jack," put in Clifton, pitying Enid as she stood there crying quietly, and looking with great appealing eyes into her brother's severely ruddy face—"suppose we take old Dobb's boat, and drop down the river a bit? If he has kept along the towing-path, we'll be sure to catch up with him soon enough."

"I shall give him a jolly good hiding if we do," said Jack. "Well, Enid, what now?"

For she had sprung forward, her face all aglow.

"She wants to come too," said Clifton. "Let her."

"Oh, yes, Jack dear, do let me," cried Enid, bent on protecting Merle from the "hiding" threatened.

"You'll go skipping about in the boat, and get upset."

"Oh, no, Jack, I won't. I'll sit quite still!"

"Well, it'll rain, and you'll catch cold."

"Indeed, Jack, I won't. I promise."

"And Aunt Jane will give you a rowing."

"She won't know; and it's only once. Do take me—I can look out for Merle while you are rowing. And I'll not be a trouble, or say one word, Jack, if you'll please let me go."

"All right, come along," said Jack, shortly; and was rather astonished at receiving a grateful hug from his sister, who fled away at once, but returned in another moment carrying Merle's great coat and comforter, "in case he should be wet," she explained.

"And, Jack, I told nurse where we were going, and that you would take care of me, in case aunt should get anxious."

"Did you bring an umbrella for yourself?"

"No, Jack; I didn't think of one."

"Girls never think of anything."

This was all the praise Enid's thoughtfulness got.

Once in the boat—Jack rowing and Clifton steering—Enid kept her word of not moving or speaking; but sat quite still, with eyes fixed on the Homeshire side of the river, ready to call out at the first glimpse of the runaway. As, however, Merle had only spotted the river when he had got a full three miles below Marshton Fallows, it will readily be believed that her outlook was not productive of any result; and before they had gone two the rain came down in torrents, much as Jack had predicted, and as it had done earlier in the day.

"Beastly weather!" muttered Clifton, as he buttoned his jacket over the smart blue tie round his throat, and looked down pathetically on the natty white shirt cuffs, which the rain was rapidly reducing to a pair of small jelly bags. "And I paid Wigsby sixpence this morning for curling my hair! Beastly weather!"

Jack said nothing, but he bundled up his sister quickly and carefully in Merle's great coat, winding the comforter round her neck and over her head as a protection against the wet; and then, taking up the oars again, resumed his labour with a good-humoured grin at Clifton's annoyance. Jack, you see, had no curls to spoil, and his cuffs were as crumpled and dirty as if he had worn them a week instead of twenty-four hours; but it was different with Clifton, who, when not excited by any more important circumstance, was particular to dandyism about his attire. Besides, Dr. Northcote had a party that evening, and would be sure to invite Master Gore to come downstairs about eight o'clock for the purpose of exhibiting his show pupil's wonderful voice; and how could a fellow sing true after sitting in the rain for a couple of hours?

Under the circumstances, he might be excused for answering testily when Jack, with a brutal disregard for his sufferings, said, cheerily—

"Come, Clif, give us a shout. 'Tramp, tramp,' or 'Paddle your own canoe.' It's awfully slow work paddling our canoe in this rain and mist."

"Sing! If you had the ghost of a voice yourself you wouldn't talk such nonsense," Clifton answered, sharply. "How can a fellow sing with his throat full of water? I sha'n't have a note left for old Northcote's party this evening."

"Oh! Clifton, I am so sorry," cried Enid, taking her eyes from the bank for a moment to rest them gratefully on her champion's face. "How good it was of you to come with us, then! I do think you are always good, Clifton."

Clifton was feeling very far from good just then; and his handsome face flushed considerably at the little girl's praise.

"Oh! I don't mind," he muttered, confusedly; and forthwith, being a good-tempered boy, tried not to mind; actually joining Enid in her eager dissuasions when Jack proposed to turn the boat's head homewards on his sister's account. They did pull in-shore before long, because Enid suggested that inquiry as to whether Merle had passed that way might be made at a cottage near the bank; but Clifton, who sprang ashore for the purpose, returned shaking his head disconsolately, and the trio pushed off again into mid-stream. Fortunately, by this time the shower had passed over; and though Jack said they ought to return if they wanted to be in time for tea, Enid begged so hard to go as far as the next lock that her brother consented; and once there, the news that a little boy, answering to Merle's description had been seen by the lock-keeper's son standing under a willow tree in the rain, gave them all courage to pursue their journey.

The evening light was shining redly in the liquid mirror below, and flushing the three young faces with a rosy tinge, as slowly but steadily their light craft cut its way through the river's crimsoned breast, leaving a long line of rippling gold in its wake. Even the heavy leaden clouds hanging above the horizon were edged with orange flame, and over the wooded hills to the west stretched a broad band of gold and ruby light; while far away in the east one little star burnt like a tiny silver lamp, "shedding its radiance on a naughty world." Now and then came the distant low of cattle from a meadow in their rear, the whistle of a ploughboy trudging homewards, or the noisy bark of a dog from some cottage hidden deep in trees; but otherwise all was very still, very calm. Even Clifton, who had taken the oars, and was humming one of the hymns, "ancient and modern," hardly sounded the notes above his breath; and Enid, wrapped in Merle's coat, leant against Jack's knee, watching the bank with gravely eager eyes, while her brother steered.

Two or three times they had pulled alongside the bank to make inquiries for Merle; and once a woman spoke to having seen some one like him on the road, and very tired and muddy-looking. It was getting so dusk now that they had to keep close to the shore, lest they should pass the fugitive unconsciously. Yet none said a word of returning.

"We must be late, anyhow," Jack muttered. "We may as well go on now."

And Enid said—

"Thank you, Jack," and tucked her hand affectionately into his arm.

By the time, however, that the boat was within twenty yards of Babbicombe Lock, the stars were all out, and the twilight waning fast. Clifton pointed to the sky, and said he thought they ought to return, for fear of making their friends anxious.

"Remember, we've got to pull up stream all the way back," he said, in answer to Enid's appealing eyes; "and it's a good eight miles. We sha'n't get home before half-past nine."

"All right," said Jack, readily. "But look here—we'll moor the boat to that punt, under the bank, and just run up to the lock to inquire. It will take less time than pulling round that bend in the river."

Clifton agreed, and the boys both jumped ashore, leaving Enid in the boat. In five minutes, however, they were back full of the account of Merle's visit, of his flight in conjunction with the loaf—nothing was said of the shilling—and of the lock-keeper's pursuit. That worthy had run along the towing path "an 'undred yairds both ways," the wife said, "an' wur mortal zure the young gentleman hadn't taken oither road. A must ha' gone up a short lane at t' corner; but as that only tuk you to a farmhouse, 'ee'd be zure to hear on him thur."

"So we will go up and see," Jack said. "It won't take a minute, and you don't mind being left, do you, Enid? You can't run as quick as we, you know."

Enid shook her head smilingly; but she felt rather lonely when the boys had been gone about two minutes, and sundry large drops of rain began to patter down again. Besides, what a very extraordinary noise that was rising out of the river at her back!

She listened.

It was a sort of snorting, groaning sound; and it came from under her feet. She held her breath, and it stopped; then went on

again, much louder, till it sounded like a wild beast forcing its way through the boards of the boat. Her heart beat quick, and in an agony of terror, not knowing what she dreaded, and dreading it all the more for the mystery, the child sprang to her feet, only anxious to reach the shore and follow her brother. The punt, however, had drifted between her and the bank; and in trying to step on to its side her unsteady feet slipped, and she fell headlong on to a tarpaulin which happened to be rolled up in the stern sheets, and from which issued a yell which nearly sent her into a fit with fright.

She rolled off, and screamed louder still. The tarpaulin opened, uncurled itself, and exposed a pale and dirty face, with two glaring, terrified eyes.

Merle!!!

Then arose a double outcry; and before the lock-keeper, his wife, or the two boys (who all heard the shrieks) could reach the punt, Enid and Merle had their arms round each other's necks, and the girl was sobbing and kissing him, and crying out—

"Oh! Merle, Merle, how could you run away and leave me! How could you be so naughty! Oh! Merle, I'm so glad you are found."

To all which, and to Jack's rough greeting and rougher rebuke, Merle said never a word—only sobbed and shivered; and when they were in the boat muttered something about being "so cold."

"Then you'll have to *be* cold till you get home," said Jack, "and your own fault, too. I dare say father'll warm you with a licking, and me into the bargain, for going after you."

Enid said nothing; but she slipped out of Merle's warm coat, and contrived to fasten it on him, and to tie his comforter round his neck, without attracting the observation of any one but her charge, who submitted unresistingly, and rather wondered why Enid's teeth would chatter and her hands shake all the while he was recounting his adventures, and priming her for the office of mediator on the way home.

The mediation was successful, or perhaps Aunt Jane's wrath had been too mollified by anxiety for worse retribution than a lengthy scolding, administered impartially. At any rate, Mr. Leyburn did not warm any of the party in the manner predicted by Jack; and the consequence of this laxity was that Enid and Merle were both laid

up with sore throats for a week. At the end of this time, however, something else happened.

A worse thing to Merle than any "warming."

One day Miss Leyburn got a letter which sent her into hysterics. She sent to the bank for her brother, and the two were closeted in the study for nearly an hour; after which Mr. Leyburn came out, looking as black as thunder, scowling at the servants, and shouting at Jack, who was late for school—

"You had better mind your work, sir, for if you don't, into the bank you go the day you're eighteen, and you'll never get another penny but what you earn there; so you'd better not begin idle, under the delusion that you are going to be a fine country gentleman."

After which speech, he marched out of the house, banging the hall door behind him. Aunt Jane had already gone to her own room in tears, and did not reappear till the evening.

Then, indeed, she came down and made this announcement to the children in the school-room:—

"My dears, I am not going to look for a governess any more. None could have the same interest in you as I have; and great as is the work and the responsibility entailed on my weak shoulders" (here the spinster gave a dreary little smile, and Jack began to look gloomily apprehensive), "I feel that, loving you as I do, I ought not—no, and I cannot shrink from sacrificing myself to your happiness." (Merle's face fell, and his lips parted in consternation.) "Jack and Enid, my loves, your grandfather is going to marry again—a woman" (Miss Leyburn emphasized this as if the atrocity of the proceeding was enhanced by the new spouse not being a man)—"a young woman, on whom he has settled Leyburn Hall and eight hundred a year, to be left at her own disposal failing an heir. I will say nothing to you about the sin, the *iniquity* of this step. There are things too dark to be entered upon before young minds; and deeply grieved and outraged as your father and I must feel, there is one thing which you will gain by this blow. I shall never leave you now," and the virgin opened her arms, with a burst of tenderness, to her young relatives. "Your unnatural grand-

father throws you over. Be comforted—your aunt devotes her life to you instead.”

“Oh, Jupiter!” cried Jack, in dismay; and going out, groaned bitterly—“She’ll never go now. Ugh-h-h!”

THE CASUAL OBSERVER.

DOING NAUTICAL.

“GOOD-BYE! God bless you! mind and write!” This in a reiterated chorus, loud and long, succeeded by endless “Hip, hip, hip, hurrahs!” and waving of hats and handkerchiefs, parasols, and, where these are absent, hands and arms. The demonstration is apparently of the most joyful description; but there are tears in eyes, and, if face is to be taken as an index of the mind, there is sorrow, as well as something akin to despair, in many a heart. There are plenty of faces to study, for the huge clipper has cast loose from her moorings, and is dropping down the river, outward bound, with nearly five hundred souls on board; and there, clustering on jetty and in boat, are friends and followers waving and wishing God-speed to the leviathan of the waters; here are scores of those to whom England has proved but a hard, cold foster-mother, and these her children are off to the sunny Austral lands to seek a new home in Queensland.

By the courtesy of the shipowners and the agent of the Queensland Government, who has the emigrants in charge, we are made au courant with all the proceedings, and traverse the noble yacht-like vessel from stem to stern, and see the arrangements made for the health and comfort of the passengers during the voyage. The vessel is a huge three-master—in sea-going parlance a full-rigged clipper ship, Boston built; and it is not until standing upon her planks, with a panorama of the Essex and Kentish shores passing on either hand, that we can realize the size of the deck, the mightiness of the tapering yards and spars, and the inter-twining of the wire rope and hempen standing and running rigging.

Certainly there is a little confusion on board; late arriving boxes, wanted on the voyage; the pens of sheep of choice breed for improving stock—not for the butcher—and the great cases of plants directed to the Acclimatisation Society at Brisbane, somewhat cumber the deck. The boats, too, are not secured in their places, and the carpenters are still busy with hammer and

saw, fixing gratings of coarse trellis work to separate classes of passengers. Compressed hay trusses, bound with iron bands, have been tumbled upon deck here; potatoes, cabbages, carrots, and turnips there—enough, it might be thought, to satisfy a town.

Well, we have quite a village on board, and here in the galley, a hot furnace of a place, with a couple of men cooking—there is a culinary apparatus hard at work, sending forth odours of roast, boiled, and stewed Tallerman’s or South Australian preserved meat, appetising and good; for this Queensland ship uses the meat she brought out. The cook, as he wipes his perspiring face, and rattles a lid or two, tells us with pride that he can cook easily here for a thousand people. Next door to him we have the donkey engine—a far from obstinate piece of mechanism, which loads and unloads the vessel, hoists and haws, pumps out the bilge from the hold, and helps the apparatus by its side, a contrivance for distilling fresh water to the tune of five hundred gallons a day from the briny waters of the ocean. A little farther on we have the bakehouse filled with “soft tommy”—no hard biscuits here, but bread baked three times a week.

Again a few steps, and we stand by the dispensary, where there is a very Scotch-looking doctor and a huge chest of drugs, and an inner door is pointed out leading into the hospital, where lies a lady who increased the number of souls on board a night or two since by the addition of one small unit. Talk, though, of small units, there are plenty of them on board—children who seem to the manner born and thoroughly happy. No wonder, for only think, you who can recall those joyous, childish days—the deck and cabins of a great ship—what a magnificent place to play at “hide and seek.”

The farewells made, people on board seem to settle down very rapidly. The boatswain, as smart a looking fellow as ever piped, is roaring in a hoarse voice to his men, whom he calls “my sons,” and urges them over each piece of hauling until they break forth into a wild, strange chant in a minor key, the end of each strain being supplemented by a tremendous pull, which hoists boat or spar in the rapid endeavour to get all square and ship-shape, the mates and boatswain being evidently jealous of the squareness of a German man-of-war lying under the guns of Tilbury Fort—looking small, though,

beside this grand argosy whose deck we tread.

Going forward, we descend into the steerage, the single men's portion, for class distinctions are rigidly adhered to. Here boxes are being examined, berths inspected, and plenty of men are lolling about, while one bearded young fellow plays a popular air with variations upon a tin whistle. There is the man here who has "loafer" written in his face plainly enough, and his history is evidently that to get rid of him his friends have subscribed the money to pay his passage. He is a weak-springed blade, that cannot be trusted to cut, and is likely enough to close upon the hand that employs him. Close by him is the stout labourer, and farther on the mechanic; boys too, and besides them, nondescripts—men of whose future success one would feel very doubtful in any land.

We pass into another part of the vessel, like the last fitted with berths all round, just large enough for the occupants. This is the single women's cabin, and there are one hundred and thirty on board, in a sort of floating secular nunnery, with a pleasant abbess in the shape of a matron. There are tables, bath-room—every arrangement possible, and the strictest rules and regulations. Come night there is closed hatchway and lock and key, one for the matron within, one for the doctor without.

The young women seem for the most part to belong to the servant-girl class, and settle down fast to their position; some are writing, many more are already doing what they can to make their three months' home tidy, and another section have taken to that ever-satisfying feminine resource, needlework. A few are sitting thinking—perhaps, of their inevitable fate—not servitude but matrimony, for the men are as six to one, and there is many a stout settler on the look-out for a partner to share his rough and ready home.

Down another hatchway in the deck we reach the married couples' department. Well, deference is due to the married state, and we have the berths turned into cabins by sliding doors. There are families here, man, wife, and children, clustered together by the tables that slide up and down as they are required. The cabins are dark, but ventilation is good, and the place is not crowded. Up the companion ladder, and we are again on deck, passing the cabin where the middies, some half-dozen of them,

are clustered, and then to the pleasant, handsomely-fitted first cabin, where every inch is made valuable, and the mizen mast that passes right through the table is ornamented so that it may look like a huge pillar placed to support the ceiling.

Again on deck, we find that the single women have gathered round one who forms the troubadour of the party, discoursing sweet (?) sounds from a German concertina with an energy that threatens the bellows. He evidently forgets that there are no menders in the wide Atlantic. There seems but little sorrow visible; there may be aching hearts, but the ever-changing scene takes up so much attention, and there is plenty of light-heartedness—enough to make those on board loudly cheer the passing Margate and Ramsgate boats, crowded as they are with passengers, and leaving behind them a trail of black smoke and badly blown brass band music.

There is a display of hilarity too as a boat or two of late arrivals from Gravesend are rowed on board, looking aghast at the way their boxes are swung up the towering sides of the great vessel, and at the tottering ladder they are to ascend.

But the vessel refuses as yet to rock, floating majestically down without apparent motion, and we take another look round at those collected on deck. What is to be their fate? Let us prophecy for once—it is an easy task: life in a far-off but beautiful land, where it is nearly always summer; a rough life, perhaps, and a hard, as far as work goes, but with it the knowledge that there is always plenty—no starvation, no beggary, and asking day by day for the crust that hundreds of others are striving to reach. There is an assisted passage; forty acres of land for those who can pay that passage, and a badly supplied labour market, where stout thews and sinews make their price.

Does fate deal hardly with you here? Yes! Are you willing to work—dig, tend sheep, chop wood, to earn your bread in the sweat of your brow, to do anything that comes to hand that you may live? Say yes, and we say go! Say no, and show the loafer's colours, and you may just as well stay here and starve as go to encumber Queensland.

The boat is at the side, dancing as if with impatience, and we descend and put off for the shore—a short journey ours, theirs one of ninety or a hundred days,

through tropic summer and the stormy winter, round Cape Horn. There is Blue Peter flying at the fore, the House Flag, the red cross and dagger at the main, and at the mizen the red ensign, blending the nation and the captain's rank. There is, too, a little fluttering red and white pennon that tells of a first-class pilot on board.

Five hundred souls in that ark of planks! We wish them the pilotage of the Greatest of All on their long voyage as we say "God-speed!"

THE ABDUCTION OF THE O'BANAGHER.

CHAPTER III.

WITHIN the enclosure of the clothes-horse The O'Banagher slumbered peacefully. From his usually demonstrative nose there came never a sound. His gentle breathing was light as an infant's. Calm and cheerful memories inspired his visions. A delightful past created for him an impossibly peaceful future. The noisy guests passed through the house on their way homeward. But at that moment he was proceeding down the aisle of a cathedral, with a lovely vision in white leaning upon his arm. They were advancing towards an altar, which, as they approached, receded and diminished, and eventually disappeared in the deceptive distance. The banging of a door caused a reverberation that must have struck the sleeping ear; but its owner was then addressing the House of Commons in strains of unexampled eloquence, so that the sound of the door was drowned in the applause that followed his peroration. Mrs. Connor, moving to and fro in an adjacent apartment, disturbed him not. He was during that interval scouring a vast territory full of stiff coverts—a thousand foxes dashed before him, ten thousand dogs pursued their panting victims, ten thousand members of the Killcot Hunt lagged behind, unable to reach *them*. *Them!*—Miss Mulligan and himself flying across the fields, safe from all pursuit, defying all rivalry. At about two o'clock in the morning The O'Banagher had a dream, which seemed to a mind reposing but reasoning in repose, extremely realistic for a dream. The voices he heard in it were exactly like real voices. He spoke in it himself, and dreamt that he

was conscious that he heard the real tones of his own voice. He was at home, he thought, at Castle Banagher. Larry, his servant, was standing before him in an attitude of respectful remonstrance. He was arguing with him. The master insisted on his own view of the case: Larry insisted on his. Both grew warm. The master became abusive. The servant became impertinent. At last, in reply to some threat of The O'Banagher, Larry shouted out defiantly—

"You're not half a man!"

Now these words, in The O'Banagher's dream, were so very real that he woke up—with a start. There could be no doubt about it. It was a real voice, but not Larry's. The voice continued, in great, gruff tones—

"You're not half a man, Corrigan! Be me sowl, I b'lieve yer no better than a thraitor."

To which a piping, asthmatical voice made reply—

"*You're* a traitor for sayin' so. Haven't I taken the oath, man—haven't I taken the oath? An' isn't it trayson agin the society to doubt me?"

"Trayson or no trayson, I'll always doubt the man that has a snakin' regard for the clergy—and that's what you have, Mr. Corrigan—d'ye see?"

"I've no snakin' regards for any one. What regard I have for the clergy I niver consayed, Mr. Brophy—d'ye see?"

"You're a fool, Corrigan!"

"Thank ye kindly, Brophy."

The O'Banagher was wide enough awake now. This was a phase of realism for which he was quite unprepared, and it was as unwelcome as it was singular. He collected his thoughts—just returning from delightful excursions in the land of dreams—and remembered that he had neglected to lock the door before retiring to rest. After the interchange of compliments between the voices, a pause occurred in the conversation, and The O'Banagher, unable to restrain his curiosity, drew aside a small portion of the linen that hung over the protecting clothes-horse, and peeped out. He was able to distinguish the figures of two men. The one was a man of something like Larry's gigantic proportions, but was considerably older than Larry. He had a shaggy red beard and moustache. His face was bronzed with travel. He wore a

great frieze cloak over his shoulder, and a wide-awake hat of green felt lay on the ground at his feet. His companion was a small, weazened creature, dressed in seedy black. He had the appearance of a lawyer's clerk who had been out of work for a good while. The expression of his face was irresolute, but cunning as the devil's. A whiskey bottle stood on a chair between them. The little man was seated on the table, the other on a low, three-legged stool. The fire was blazing brightly, and a candle stuck in a bottle gave them as much light as they wanted. The big man was smoking a long and rank Continental cigar, and examining the lock of an old pistol. Presently he laid the weapon down on the table, turned to his companion, and said, in a tone that was one-half command and one-half entreaty—

"I tell ye, Corrigan, ye musn't go to confession while ye're in this business—d'ye hear?"

"Och, the devil's cure to ye, man—will ye talk sinse? Why, it's little better than a heretic ye are."

The big man brought down his fist upon the table with a force that shook the little man who sat on it.

"Well, an' supposin' I *am* a heretic! D'ye think I wouldn't glory in it? D'ye think I wouldn't throw up any religion that stood between me an' me country? I tell ye, whin Ireland's got her liberty, it'll be time enough to arrange about her religion."

The man on the table whistled slowly, as who should say—

"I decline to argue this question with you."

"Besides, ye cowardly craythur, haven't they denounced ye from the altar?"

"Divil a denounce."

"They've denounced the Faynians."

"Well?"

"*You're* a Faynian."

"Well?"

"Thin they've denounced you—that's logic."

"Begorra, Misther Brophy, I'm sorry for your logic. You've heard it said that all men are liars—haven't ye, Brophy? But you wouldn't knock a man down for sayin' so; though perhaps, if he applied the sayin' to yerself particularly, you might feel inclined to give him just a taste av yer quality."

The big man uttered an oath, and gave it as his opinion that his little friend would chop logic with the devil; to which the little man replied that he chopped logic with Brophy, which was the next thing to it, bedad.

"I wish ye'd look at things in a more sensible way, Brophy," went on the little man called Corrigan. "Sure the priests have always stuck to us; an' although they may seem—mind, I say *seem*—to be agin us now, faith, whin fortune shines on us they'll every wan come round."

"Confound them!" said Brophy, hissing the word between his teeth, and knitting his brows—"who wants them to come round, will ye tell me *that*? D'ye think I'd give twopence to-morrow for the blessings of the black-coated hypocrites that cursed me to-day?"

"There, that'll do, Brophy—that'll do," said Corrigan, crossing himself. "May the Lord forgive ye, for it's a big sin intirely to curse the priests."

"Pshaw!" replied his big companion; "don't be frightened, ma bouchal, yer not in the confessional now. There's no wan listenin' to ye, only meself that has a right to hear. Be the same token, ye don't confiss Faynianism, do ye?"

"Faynianism's not a sin, Brophy, an' I niver confiss anything that isn't. Talk sinse, man alive, talk sinse. Why, I'm as deep in the business as you are, an' I'll be bound I've done as much for the cause too."

"No doubt, Misther Corrigan—no doubt you've done a dale for the cause; but you've made a dale more *out* of the cause, 'wid yer secretaryships and travelin' expinses. Be the holy poker, I always say what I think—and what I'm thinkin now is *this*: that av it ever served yer turn, ye'd inforrum on the whole blessed lot."

"Brophy, av ye weren't a big man—the Lord that made me—I—I—I'd knock ye down."

Brophy gave a derisive chuckle, and glanced contemptuously at the utterer of the threat.

"P'raps ye'd better thry it on, Corrigan. Sure, I've no doubt yer bite is as cruel as yer bark—only I dar say, now, it's in the back of a man's leg ye'd prefer to put yer teeth. Begorra, it's a hard day for poor ould Ireland when she's obliged to take the likes av you into her saycrets."

Corrigan looked reproachfully at his irri-

table companion, and began whining to the accuser—

"Sure, I dunno what's come over ye, man. Is it to get callin' each other names that we meet again after bein' parted so long? Have I iver done anything to make ye think manely of me—have I? Tell me what it is, if I have. Haven't I taken the oath—arn't I exposed to as much danger as yerself, wid all yer palaver?"

"Yer heart's not in it."

"Arrah—why not, now?"

"Sure I see it in yer face, man. Ye've taken the oath—yes; but ye niver contimplate the maning of that oath. You're ready enough to swear; but, be heavens, you're not so ready to take up a gun and march. You think it 'll all come to nothing, an' you *hope* it will."

"Brophy, it's yerself is in it—for no other man dar say as much to me."

Brophy laughed his quiet, contemptuous laugh.

"Don't be standin' on yer dignity, alana, bekase ye'll make me laugh in spite of meself, an' I'm in no laughin' humour. Arrah, Corrigan, d'ye think I can't read ye like a book? The likes av you to be enthruisted wid a sacred mission!"

"Sacred mission! Haven't I taken the oath? Wasn't I chosen a delegate? Haven't I worked night an' day for the cause?"

"Worked? Ay, but *how*? Writin' layders and makin' little speeches here and there. But what about the dhrolls that I set agoin' whin I was here last? How is it you couldn't keep thim up? And where's the pikes that was to be ready, and the stores av powder? No, no, man, ye don't look on this as a rale thing; and if thim ye've sworn in takes their opinions from ye, I wouldn't place much dependance on thim in the day of throuble—that's all."

Corrigan bit his lip, and replied, after a pause—

"You don't expect everybody 'll be just like yerself, Brophy? Wan av us is good at wan thing, and wan av us is good at another. You're a soldier. I'm a politician. I can *write* a betther layder than you can; but you can *be* a betther layder than me."

Brophy shrugged his shoulders, and applied himself to the whiskey. He then lit another of his long cigars. The big Fenian was a true Irishman—and as such, was particularly open to compliment. He recognized the justice of Corrigan's flattery, and

reaching forward his hand, he said, in milder tones—

"Well, well, shake hands. Ye hadn't the makin' av yerself, an' maybe appearances is agin ye."

Corrigan accepted the compliment, shook hands with his leader, and clutching the whiskey bottle, drowned all ill-feeling in a deep draught.

"I'd like to see ye act in an emergincy," remarked Brophy, good-humouredly.

"Would ye, faith? thin Heaven sind me the opportunity, an' begorra I think I'll gratify ye."

"Well, look here, now! What would ye do av ye caught a spy at wan av yer matins?" said Brophy, categorically.

"What would I *do*—is it? Why, shoot him, av coorse," replied Corrigan, without moving a muscle of his face.

Now, The O'Banagher from his bed had been eagerly drinking in this conversation, and watching with great interest the movements of this pair of conspirators; but when he heard the last sanguinary declaration of the little villain in black, he suddenly removed his eye from the aperture in the screen, and, getting rapidly and silently out of bed, proceeded to creep underneath the couch so recently the scene of beatific visions. The couch upon which The O'Banagher had been reposing was a very narrow iron piece of furniture, which, by a simple but ingenious contrivance, was capable of being folded up, and in the day-time acted as an arm-chair that gave no hint whatever of its nocturnal uses. He had just inserted his head under the edge, and was endeavouring to get his shoulders in after it, when, exerting himself to this end with his leg, his right foot slipped suddenly and forcibly against one of the upright supporters of the clothes-horse, sending that piece of furniture, with all its weight of linen, to the ground. At the accompanying crash the two Fenians jumped instantly to their feet. Brophy, snatching the candle, rushed forward, with Corrigan at his heels. What the candle revealed to them were the body and legs of a little gentleman, whose head and shoulders were hidden under a very diminutive bedstead, and who was seemingly under the impression that he was keeping his presence a profound secret. He was not permitted to indulge the illusion for any length of time; for Brophy, who was a man of deeds

as well as of words, clutched The O'Banagher by the leg, and, by means of a rough jerk, dislodged him, setting him on his feet by means of another jerk, even more startling than the first. The O'Banagher, trembling in every limb, and feeling nervously for his eye-glass, looked the very picture of misery. He was about to shout "Murder and thieves!" but his captor, divining his intention, clapped his hand rudely on his mouth; while Corrigan, obtaining a piece of firewood, speedily shaped the block into a gag, which was forced between the gentleman's teeth. His own silk handkerchief, obtained from his own proper pocket, was tied over his mouth. Corrigan then searched about the bed for any property of the prisoner that might be conveniently restored to him. He was permitted to put on his boots and coat. His head-dress was not discoverable. Warning him, with an oath, to be very careful how he conducted himself, the captors lit a dark lantern, and led the unfortunate victim silently from the house. As they left the portal of Mrs. Connor's hospitable inn, the bleak morning air rushed about the bald and unprotected head of the prisoner, and he shivered pitably; but his new acquaintances had neither time nor inclination to study his minor grievances. Leading him for some distance up the Isnagarran-road, they turned suddenly into a dark boreen.

The O'Banagher, anticipating immediate execution, would have fallen to the ground, but was dragged along by his grim custodians. The three figures were immediately afterwards lost in the impenetrable gloom.

JUSTICE IN THE CITY.

A SKETCH.

THE groups of rosy-faced people, "smelling of the provinces," as our Gallic neighbours funnily phrase it, who may be seen any morning, map in hand, about the City, and solemnly "doing" the various lions of the metropolis, should add to their experiences of Loudon a visit to the justice-room of the Mansion House.

Here are to be witnessed in constant rehearsal big dramas and little farces of real life. The programme varies daily, and there is nothing to pay for seats. Few persons, however, not connected with the court by business, or in less meritorious ways, seem aware of the existence of such a place; yet

if the smallest portion of the vast clockwork of City life go wrong, it is here that the offending atom is first subjected to the searching scrutiny of the legal microscope.

Through the small apartment set aside for the administration of civic justice, filtrate fraudulent secretaries, absconding stock-brokers, reckless manslaughtering cabmen, and racing omnibus drivers, not disdaining obstructive costermongers and impudent City flower girls. A distinctive feature of this tribunal is, that whereas many extramural police-courts comprise each a wide radius of legal jurisdiction, so that delay must often be great in transport of suspects from the various stations to the judgment-room, the offences here are committed under the very nose of the Lord Mayor himself, the delinquents being honoured by an immediate introduction to that powerful functionary.

Among bankers there is a rule that should any of the employes commit a forgery, embezzle money, or in any way lose sight of the difference between meum and tuum, the instant prosecution of the offender shall follow, conducted under the auspices of the Bankers' Protection Society. A detective appears like magic on the scene, and having received his instructions, cosily—one might almost say affectionately—links his arm within that of his crestfallen charge as they emerge into the street, to all appearance two friends who, accidentally met, are about to discuss together the mid-day chop at some neighbouring eating-house. Threading their way through the busy crowds of Cornhill and Lombard-street—the officer's wary eye ever ready for symptoms of a bolt—they arrive at the grimy portals of the Mansion House, and enter the building at a small side gate, which leads by a passage to the prisoners' room, immediately beneath the court.

By this time, nearly noon, a motley and generally ill-smelling crowd of citizens is assembled on the pavement before the well-guarded entrance that faces the Royal Exchange, eagerly awaiting the arrival of the long gilt hand of the clock in Lombard-street at the hour of twelve. As the first stroke is heard, a tall, stern-faced City policeman—a fine specimen of a fine class of men—slowly unbars the gate, and the audience surges up the principal flight of steps conducting into the edifice. Many of the company are evidently more accustomed to the side door, judging from the furtive

manner in which they sidle past the red-coated usher, whose practised eye lights upon many a convicted rascal among the pushing crowd. Strange that police-courts should be the constant haunt of those who have found them but the ante-room to a prison!

The civic Palais de Justice is, like most other London justice-rooms, a small, badly lighted, ill-ventilated apartment. The magistrate is installed at a raised desk facing the audience. Some seats on each side of him form the bench whereon, when no other alderman is present, busy counsel take up their quarters to bewilder the municipal brain with their legal quips and quibbles. In the centre of the room is a large table, also appropriated by lawyers and their clerks; to the left are seats for the newspaper reporters; to the right the witness-box; and facing the judge is a sort of covered staircase, out of which the prisoner pops up into the dock before his lordship, as though propelled by some invisible agency below, the trap-door closing behind him with a portentous bang. Beyond this, shut out by an iron bar extending the whole length of the room, and packed into a few yards square, is the British public.

The peculiarly frowsy odour common to crime and criminals, not to be exorcised by the strongest disinfectants, pervades the place, and against this the civic nose is protected by a regiment of smelling bottles, spread out on the judicial desk. Presently a pleasant-looking old gentleman in spectacles takes up a position at the table in the middle of the court, directly under the presiding magistrate. This is the chief clerk, who must be a sound lawyer, putting many an incisive question to both accused and witnesses, and virtually determining the sentences of which the Lord Mayor is the mouthpiece. The members of the bar next take their places—not disguised in wig and gown, but looking most unprofessional in the loosest of morning coats and the smartest of coloured neckties.

The reporters are ready with their notebooks, and those who are to give evidence prowl uneasily about the enclosure reserved for them—some, especially the women, with a half-frightened expression on their faces; others with the self-conscious importance of possessors of valuable information. Noticeable among these is a determined-looking old gentleman, who, whenever he ventures

near the bar that separates performers from spectators, is captured by a woman of dissipated appearance, and hoarsely adjured to "let her Bill down heasy," which he invariably declines to do, evidently intending the said Bill to come down on this occasion with a hearty thump. The chief usher, a splendid creature in red and gold, concentrates all his energies in a prolonged "Hush-sh-sh!" to enforce silence.

A sudden effervescence to the left of the magisterial chair, and a side door opens, disclosing a gorgeous beadle, who lurches into the court, and, standing at the salute, his ponderous mace planted firmly on the ground, announces "The Right Honourable the Lord Mayor," reverentially aspiring the third word of the pompous sentence. In walks his lordship, a couple of aldermen in his wake, habited in furry gown and massive chain, who forthwith proceed to instal themselves on the bench. The covered door at the same instant is thrust up, and a ragged, half-starved urchin is ejected into the dock, guarded by two formidable policemen, who stand one on each side of the young criminal—like Gog and Magog, the presiding genii of the City, till the chief clerk intimates by a sign that the first act of the morning performance may commence.

Unrolling from a greasy cloth a dozen or so, of children's boots, and fixing a stern eye upon the carved ceiling above him, one of the twain unfolds his sorry tale. Speaking in a slow, deliberate tone, and pausing at every sentence to allow the clerk to take down the words in writing, he relates how last evening (always evening, never night with a policeman) "he met the prisoner in Cannon-street with a parcel—stopped him—asked him what he had there—said he didn't know—asked him where he got it—said a man gave it him to carry—prisoner tried to run up the street, and"—here policeman warms to his story, and is sharply requested not to speak so fast—"caught him in a few minutes, and took him to the station."

As the constable ceases, the determined-looking old gentleman (proof against female persuasion) steps into the witness-box, and being sworn, says that the boy, who has robbed him before, walked off with the shoes unperceived by any one in his employ.

"Do you wish to ask the witness any questions?" frowns the Lord Mayor.

The boy looks up at the tall figures each side of him, glances furtively at his mother

in court, and subsides into a whine of injured innocence.

"Anything known of him?"

Alas! too much, judging from the policeman's jerky replies to the magistrate's question.

"Had a month at this court before for picking a lady's pocket—got a whipping at Worship-street for robbing a till six months ago; his mother's always drunk."

Here is the gist of the whole matter, and everybody peers about, eager for a view of the boy's worthy relative—an occasion seized upon by the prisoner to change his cringing whine into a fearful roar of grief. In vain does the judge call for her presence in the witness-box, the woman has sneaked out of court at the first mention of previous character; so, after much stretching over his desk, and whispering with the chief clerk, the Lord Mayor leans back for the more effective delivering of the sentence.

"Boy," says he, with a dark frown, "let us see what hard labour for three months will do for you, and then you will go to a reformatory for five years." And up goes the trap-door, boy and policeman disappearing into the lower regions. A short interval occurs, during which the curiosity of the expectant crowd is excited by the noise of many shuffling feet. The slamming down of the door discloses no less than sixteen scarecrows standing in regimental order before the Bench, all clothed in a coarse kind of sacking, stitched roughly together. They appear to be of all ages—from the impudent gamin of fourteen to the hardened old tramp of seventy. The workhouse master—a fine-looking man—gets into the witness-box, and upon the solemn adjuration of the usher to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, proceeds to inform the assembled ratepayers that about six o'clock that morning the sixteen prisoners took advantage of a general row and free fight among the paupers to tear up the garments provided for them by the nation. The judge's inquiry into the reason of such eccentric behaviour is rather illogically met—the younger vagabonds declaring in chorus that "they want to go to sea," the old hands asseverating that they "aint a-goin' to eat no more 'stralian meat." How this object is to be effected, and that grievance remedied, by resolving oneself into a state of nudity the Court fails to perceive; and the strange company is marched

off to the tune of six weeks' durance vile in one of her Majesty's metropolitan prisons.

The next case is that of a brewer's drayman, who appears in the dock in the leathern apron and red cap of his trade. He is obviously intoxicated, and, after a great deal of lurching about, places his elbows on the rails in front of him, and planting his bloodshot face between his hands for support, leans forward with a drunken stare of indifference. This worthy, after driving a heavy team along Cheapside at the rate of twenty miles an hour, and coming into collision with everybody and everything, has tumbled off his seat on to the asphalt pavement just in front of the Mansion House. The police pick him from among his horses' legs, and produce him before the sitting magistrate. His sole defence being an incoherent history of his mother-in-law, he is sternly ordered to be locked up till sober.

Hitherto there has been plenty of merriment among the audience, not altogether restrained by officials whose features, professionally grim, relax at times into something like a smile, which breach of decorum is at once the signal for a general guffaw. The circumstances of many of the cases are, however, only painful in all their details. Such an one is the following:—

A tall, gentlemanly young man, whose arrest while at business we have already chronicled, stands, well gloved and hat in hand, in the place vacated by his unsavoury brethren. Modest and respectful in demeanour, he at once makes a favourable impression.

A long, lean, solemn-visaged gentleman, sitting next the Lord Mayor—the two aldermen having had enough of it, and departed—slowly rises, and fixing one eye on the prisoner, the other on his lordship, commences the prosecution in the well-known legal monotone. The prisoner, it seems, is one of the cashiers at a large bank in the City, a position involving the trust of vast amounts of money, in coin as well as notes. In this establishment, as in many others, it is the custom for the managers to visit once a month the till of every cashier, for the purpose of checking the balance of notes and counting the bags of coin then in the clerk's possession. On this occasion the authorities had found it convenient to make their usual round a day earlier than was customary. The till belonging to the clerk next the ac-

cused had been examined, his coin found correct, and the inspectors had passed on to the investigation of the prisoner's cash, leaving his companion in the act of placing his bags of gold in the small hand barrow, for removal to the safes of the establishment. The prisoner's notes were then told over and found to be accurate, his bags of gold duly weighed and counted in his presence. Five hundred sovereigns were missing! Upon turning round to demand some explanation as to the deficit, the manager discovered him in the act of transferring a bag of gold from the already examined cashbox of his neighbour to his own till, trusting by that means to escape present detection. Taken red-handed, a policeman had been summoned, and the prisoner now stood in the dock before them, charged with the felonious embezzlement of five hundred pounds. Half a dozen reporters, who have not considered the previous cases worth copy, now scribble their hardest, and the usher glares fiercely round the court for silence, eventually pouncing upon a melancholy-looking little boy, whom he summarily ejects as a disturber of the public peace. After a short pause a young man, dandily dressed in light trousers and ruby-coloured scarf (an eminent Q.C. nevertheless), darts up in the middle of the court, and demurs in energetic terms to all that his learned friend has stated with reference to the prisoner. The arguments he uses to support his theory are very powerful, and seem to have some effect upon the Court, in spite of the opposing counsel, who ceaselessly bobs up and down, pregnant with objections. Witnesses are then heard on either side, the prisoner cross-examining some of them with the energy of despair; but the evidence for the prosecution is too strong, and after some consultation with his alter ego, the chief clerk, his lordship fully commits "William Thompson" to take his trial at the Central Criminal Court.

Ere the trap-door can open for its prey, a well-dressed young woman—probably wife or sweetheart of the accused—who has been tearfully observant of all the proceedings, suddenly rises and sobs out—

"I beg your pardon, my lord; but—"

"You have nothing to beg my pardon for," is the curt reply, thus dismissing any further plea for the accused, whose lips for the first time quiver as he meets the agonized glance of his would-be intercessor.

The last act of the entertainment has reached its final scene, and the next ten minutes are devoted to the uninteresting process of hearing affidavits and granting summonses. Then one of the ushers, wheeling round to the gaping public, exclaims in solemn but illiterate accents—

"The public business bein' hover, all pussons is requested to retire hout."

HOW I WAS NOT MARRIED.

"A HAPPY new year!" It's all very well to wish a fellow a happy new year; but I should like to know how I am to have one. I was to have been married to dearest Eugenia the day before yesterday; but just as I was about to raise the cup of happiness to my lips, it was dashed to the ground—and here I am, the most miserable of men. Eugenia says she will have nothing more to do with me; and although she has the sweetest disposition in the world, still, when she says a thing she sticks to it. I've tried to explain, but explanations are useless; she won't listen to them.

I'll tell you how it was. I'm a nervous man—I own it; and when the day before yesterday came, of course I was in a great state of trepidation. I got up earlier than usual, so as to have plenty of time for my preparations. In fact, I was so early that my hot water had not been brought, so I had to shave in cold; and the consequence was, what with cold and nervousness, I cut myself in two or three places. Court-plaster being applied, my visage appeared more like Doctor Syntax's after his return from the wars than that of an expectant bridegroom.

I took care to get my dressing over long before the time of starting, in case I might be delayed at the last moment by any difficulty with my necktie, or in parting my hair. I never can do those two things in a hurry. I part my hair in the middle, because Eugenia used to say that it suited my expression. I generally make about six attempts before getting the parting straight; and then, the seventh time, nerving myself, I suppose, by what I was taught at school about Bruce and the spider, I usually succeed. So you can easily understand that, if I am in a hurry, there is no saying how long I may be before arriving at a satisfactory result. I must say I like parting my

hair, although there is a certain element of disappointment in not being able to get the parting straight after several efforts. I often think of the words of the poet—

"Parting is such sweet sorrow,
That I could part my hair until to-morrow."

I have given up poetry for some time—my *Eugenia* is too practical for it; but those lines cling to me. But I am wandering from the point.

I live in Charlotte-street, Bloomsbury-square. My best man lives in the country; so we arranged that we should meet, before the ceremony, in the vestry of the church—St. Martin's Church. Dearest *Eugenia's* father has his office and also lives in Spring-gardens; and as he is a vestryman as well, he naturally wished us to be married at the parish church.

I decided that eighteen minutes would be sufficient to allow myself for driving to the church; so, after waiting about an hour and a half in about the same state of mind as a criminal before his execution, I sent the servant for a cab.

"Cheer up, sir," said my landlady, kindly, as I left the house; "lor! it's nothing when you're used to it. I've been through it myself three times now, and I buried my third two years ago come the tenth of next month."

I shuddered as I went down the steps. I was only number one.

The cabman held the door of the cab open for me as I got in; and as he shut it he looked me full in the face, and, with a savage scowl, said—

"Oh! it's you, is it, my man? I've got yer at last, 'ave I?"

With that he jumped on to his box, and drove violently off.

I am not a large man, and I must say that that savage scowl startled me. I am rather timid with cabmen at the best of times, and always make a point of giving them sixpence over their legal fare. I could not understand what his remark about having got me at last meant, but I felt considerably relieved when he mounted his box and drove off.

As we drove down Bloomsbury-street, I got a shilling more than the right fare ready, in order to appease his wrath when I got out.

"Hallo!" I thought, suddenly, "he's going wrong," as, after going a short dis-

tance down St. Andrew-street, he turned sharply off to the left, into some of the purlieus of St. Giles's.

"Hi! cabman," I cried, putting my head out of the window; "wrong way—St. Martin's Church—keep t'y'r right."

The man only gave a diabolical grin, and, putting his tongue into his cheek, gave his horse the whip.

"Dear me," I thought, distractedly, "the man's drunk; and I shall be late at the church. What will my *Eugenia* think?"

I got half out of the window in my desperation.

"St. Martin's Church!" I screamed again.

"I know what I'm about. You keep quiet," roared the cabman, in return.

"He doesn't seem drunk," I thought; "but what can he be about?"

We were now in the midst of the slums of St. Giles's—places that I had not been in before in my life.

All at once I remembered having heard of people being taken away in cabs, and never heard of more—murdered, perhaps, for the sake of the money they had about them. I burst into a cold perspiration.

"Let me out!" I called, at the top of my voice, getting half out of the window.

"Not if I know it," bellowed the cabman; "I've been on the look-out for you for the last two months, and I don't mean to let you slip through my fingers now."

And again he whipped on his horse.

"Oh, dear! oh, dear!" I said to myself, "there's no mistake about it; he means to take me to some den and there murder me. Oh, my darling *Eugenia*, I shall never see you any more!"

I thought once of jumping out of the cab; but the man was driving at such a furious pace that I should have been killed in the attempt.

The streets we were passing through were of the lowest description, and the few people that were to be seen were in keeping with the neighbourhood. However, I thought that even *they* might be induced to come to my rescue. I entreated them to stop the cab, and used every gesture I could think of to explain my meaning; but they only smiled, as if it was the best joke in the world. I suppose they took me for a lunatic going to the madhouse. I sank back despairingly into the cab.

"This is awful," I soliloquized; "to be borne away in the full light of day, and

without one's friends having the least idea what has become of one."

And then I thought of the paragraphs that would appear in the different papers about the "mysterious disappearance of a gentleman."

I looked out of the window: the streets appeared so deserted that even here, in the open street, it seemed very probable that I might be robbed and murdered before help could arrive.

I made another frantic appeal to the cabman, beseeching him to let me out.

"Sit quiet, or I'll turn you over," he said, threateningly, over his shoulder.

Thoughts of contusions and broken limbs passed through my brain, so I drew back. All uneasiness about the wedding party waiting for me at the church had now left me, in the greater anxiety for my own safety.

We were going at the same violent pace when the cab suddenly turned a lane narrower than the rest.

"Now my fate is sealed," I thought; but no, still my agony was prolonged, and in a minute we emerged into a wider thoroughfare; and at last, after another turn or two, we pulled up.

The man jumped down, and opened the door.

"Now, then, tumble out," he said, brutally.

I am not a large man, as I think I said before, but I resolved to sell my life dearly. I sprang out.

Hurrah! the first person that met my gaze was a policeman.

"Here, policeman, help!" I cried, rushing up to him.

"Well," he said, slowly, "what's the matter?"

I was proceeding to explain, when the cabman pushed forward.

"I gives this 'ere cove into custody," he said, "for going off without paying his fare."

I started.

"Two months ago," he went on, "I druv him from the City to the Burlington Arcade; and when I put him down, he slipped in at one end and out of the other without paying me."

"There's some mistake," I exclaimed. "I wasn't in London two months ago." Looking at my watch, I found it was five minutes to eleven. "There's certainly some mistake," I continued; "and what's more, I

must be off. I have an important engagement."

"Not so fast, sir," said the policeman, laying his hand gently but firmly on my arm; "come to the station, and the inspector will take the charge."

There was nothing for it but to comply; so I accompanied the two into the police-station, for it was there that the cabman had driven to in such hot haste.

When I saw the inspector, I protested to him that it was all a mistake, but without effect.

"The magistrate's sitting now," he said; "and after one or two other cases are disposed of, he will be able to take yours."

My heart sank. What was I to do? I ought already to be at the church, and I pictured the consternation which must already have begun at my non-appearance.

"I can't wait a moment longer," I exclaimed, passionately. "I *must* go."

The inspector expressed his regret, but told me that I could not.

All at once a happy thought struck me.

"Here, cabman," I said, "what was the amount of the fare?"

"Arf-a-crown," he answered.

"Then here are five shillings," I replied, handing him the sum.

The man slowly closed one eye, and thrust his hands into his pockets.

"I dessay you'd like it," he said; "but you don't catch me a-taking it. I mean to prosecute yer, now I've got yer, to the last drop."

My spirits fell again.

"How long is it likely to be before we can get it settled?" I asked, anxiously.

"Can't say exactly," replied the inspector; "ten minutes or a quarter of an hour, very likely."

"But—but—I am going to be married this morning," at last I blurted out; "and I ought to be at the church by this time."

"Very sorry, sir," said the inspector, coolly, as if I had only said it was time I went to lunch; "but if gentlemen will get into trouble, they must take the consequences."

"But it wasn't me at all, I've told you," I replied, furiously, regardless of grammar.

"Jest wot the claimant says," remarked the cabman, sententiously.

"You see," continued the inspector, "the case must either come on now, or you must

be bailed out; and it would take as long to do the one as the other."

I paced up and down the room in uncontrollable excitement, looking at my watch the while.

Five—ten minutes elapsed, and still the other cases were not finished.

I had reached a state bordering on frenzy, when the inspector at last said it was our turn, and we went into court.

I felt almost as guilty, as I entered, as if I had really committed the offence.

The cabman stated his case: about some person who had taken the cab from the City to the Burlington arcade, and had gone away without paying his fare.

"And there he is," he said, pointing to me.

Of course I flatly denied the charge, explaining the impossibility of my being in London at the same time that I was at Margate.

"How do you know this is the gentleman?" inquired the magistrate.

"I knows him by his general look," answered the cabman, "and partic'larly by them black things about his face."

"I only put the sticking-plaster on this morning," I exclaimed, triumphantly.

The cabman said nothing to this, as he was fumbling in his pocket.

"This'll prove it," he said at last, drawing forth a glove; "he left this behind him."

"Let the gentleman try it on," said the magistrate.

The glove was passed to me. Now I am rather proud of my hand. I take seven and a half, ladies' size; and this glove was about nine.

"That is certainly not a fit," said the magistrate, smiling, as I put my hand into it.

The cabman, changing countenance, looked rather sheepish.

"That's queer," he said, slowly, scratching his head.

"Are you still certain this is the person whom you took to the Burlington Arcade?" asked the magistrate.

"Vell, I don't know," replied the man, dubiously. "You see I made sure it was him, specially when I saw that black stuff on his face; but p'raps, arter all, it was some one else. Now I come to think of it," he added, "the fare as cut away was cross-eyed."

"Was what?" asked the magistrate.

"Cross-eyed," replied the other, in a louder key, under the impression that the magistrate was slightly deaf.

"Do you mean he squinted?"

"On course I do, your wuship."

"Kindly look at me, sir," said the magistrate, addressing me.

Dear Eugenia used always to admire my eyes—she said they were so expressive; so I turned them with confidence on the magistrate.

"This gentleman does not squint," he said.

The cabman was now thoroughly at fault, and could only scratch his head and say nothing.

"You have clearly made a mistake," said the magistrate, severely, turning to the cabman; "and I consider the gentleman has just cause to complain of the slight grounds on which you have based the charge against him. It appears to me that the sole proof of identity that you had was the sticking-plaster."

"Vell, and wot does he go a-sticking the stuff about his face, a-deceiving of folks, for?" asked the cabman, in injured tones.

"The case is dismissed," said the magistrate, curtly.

Casting a look of mingled rage and reproach at the cabman, I hurried from the court. I did not venture to take another cab, but sped on foot by the shortest route to the church. When I arrived there, it was only to see the verger closing the doors.

"Be you the gentleman as was to have been married to-day?"

I replied in agony that I was.

"Then the party left five minutes ago," he said. "They thought you wasn't coming."

I thought at first of going in pursuit; but I found it was too late to be married then. Besides which, I was in such a state of excitement that I could not make up my mind to encounter the wedding party; so I rushed off home, and as soon as I had a little recovered, I penned a note of explanation to Eugenia.

She sent back a cutting reply, refusing to have anything to say to me, and concluded by telling me that she could never consent to be led to the altar by one who had stood in the felon's dock.

Now wish me a Happy New Year!

TABLE TALK.

UNDER the direction of the City Commissioners, Mr. Haywood, the engineer, has been for some time past making investigations by means of the police as to the slipperiness of the various kinds of pavement in the City—asphalte, wood, and granite—and the number of horses that fall. Remarks have been made, too, in his report, on the way in which the horses do fall, and about the difficulty of rising. A great outcry has been made of late about the asphalte being so injurious to the horses; but this report goes to prove that at some seasons the granite paving is far more slippery. The fact is, if people would go to the right end to see, the falling of a horse now and then on any pavement in a wet or muddy state is a matter of course, and must happen frequently. In very rare cases would the horse hurt itself, and broken knees would almost never be the consequence, on the smooth asphalte. The horse—poor beast!—would fall lightly and recover itself, only in our sapient wisdom we will not let it. Judge for yourselves: look at the next 'bus or van horse that is down, and see how it is strangling in its collar and hung helplessly from the pole, kicking frantically if its legs have fallen inwards, until most probably it strikes its fellow-labourer from off his hoofs to double the tangle. Then come shouting and sitting on the poor brutes' heads; dragging at this trace, tugging at that buckle; and after, perhaps, blocking up the whole street for a quarter of an hour ere they are set at liberty, freed from the van or 'bus, when they leap up, wet and shivering. How many years has this been going on? How many more will it be before some one with brains will contrive a bolt to the end of the pole, after the fashion of greyhound leashes and slips—a bolt which can be drawn at the head of the pole, another at the splinter bar, so as to leave the horses free from the vehicle to which they are harnessed? We venture to predict that the troubles of "a horse down" would be shorn of five-sixths of the difficulties, and that we should hear much less about the slippery state of what is really a boon to our noisy thoroughfares—the asphalte.

ONLY LAST WEEK we gave a short sketch relating to Human Sacrifice among the Aztecs. Only a day afterwards the *Telegraph*

correspondent gave the following description of the same practice, as it exists in wonderful similarity to this day upon the West Coast of Africa:—"The Bonnys, it appears, have three great Ju-ju, or hidden powers. First comes the yam Ju-ju, whose influence decides the harvest; to him is sacrificed each year, at the recurrence of the yam crop, a human being, generally a prisoner. His head is cut off, without torture, and that, with other sacred fragments, is hung in the temple, till next year brings another victim. Then comes the war Ju-ju, who is invoked at the declaration of hostilities, and propitiated from time to time by human sacrifice, with the same ceremonies. Last comes the white man's Ju-ju, who has trade in charge. His victim is a young albino girl, a class common on that coast. After selection, at the appointed time of year, the child is given some weeks of unlimited indulgence, being regarded as sacred. She is conducted in procession every day through the markets and the town, bearing a white wand. With this she is encouraged to point at anything that strikes her fancy, the which is immediately seized by attendant priests, and confiscated for the Ju-ju's service. When the time comes, the child is put into a canoe very secretly, and cast overboard at the bar of the river, thus propitiating the deity who has it in his power to upset the white man's boats when coming to trade. Her poor little body thus escapes the fate of her fellow-victims, that are devoutly eaten up by the faithful crowd."

HOW QUAINLY some of our old books of instruction are written. The other day a little Brooks of Sheffield was reading from a history of England that the Ancient Britons were in a very rude state, and wore no clothes. His remark was not surprising: "Oh, ma! that was rude."

Communications to the Editor should be addressed to the Office, 19, Tavistock-street, Covent-garden, W. C. Contributions should be legibly written, and only on one side of each leaf.

All Contributions are attentively considered, and unaccepted MSS. are returned on receipt of stamps for postage; but the Editor cannot hold himself responsible for any accidental loss. No unaccepted MSS. will be returned until a written application has been made for them.

Terms of Subscription for ONCE A WEEK, free by post:—Weekly Numbers for Six Months, 5s. 5d.; Monthly Parts, 5s. 8d.

ONCE A WEEK

NEW SERIES.

No. 317.

January 24, 1874.

Price 2d.

JACK'S SISTER; OR, WOMANLY PAST QUESTION.

CHAPTER VII.
UNDER THE WILLOWS.



EARLY in the spring of 186—, eleven years from that day recorded in my last chapter, there were standing together, outside the principal pastrycook's in the High-street, Oxford, three young men, students of the University, whose grey walls and lofty spires,

now tinged with pink from the last rays of the setting sun, looked down majestically on her children from a background of pale, pure blue, dappled by tiny rose-coloured cloudlets, which were flocking out over the eastern horizon like—I use the simile of one of the young gentlemen—a herd of charity schoolchildren in pink pinafores.

The biggest of the three, who happened to be the unpoetical individual quoted above—a strapping, broad-shouldered fellow, measuring six feet in his stockings, with arms like a prizefighter's, and a red, healthy face, crowned with a close-cropped mop of curly brown hair—wore his academical gown so

carelessly that you could see he was attired underneath in a complete suit of duck and flannel, perhaps the most becoming dress a great, big-limbed fellow can assume; and the companion on the right hand—a dapper, sprightly-looking man, older than either of the other two, with a long silky moustache, perpetually in the way of his speech, to judge from his violent lisp in talking, and a pair of lean, wiry wrists, which belied the softness of his cheeks—was in like attire, and carrying, besides, a pair of new tiller ropes over his left arm. Jack's uncouth simile—for of course the big fellow was Jack Leyburn, and I merely mention the fact for the benefit of those dolts who always require a special introduction—sent his friend into a fit of laughter, from which he only recovered to exclaim, with a glance of commiseration at the third member of the party—

“Have pity on your couthin, Jack. Your horrible prothaic ideas are too much for any one with a grain of thentiment in him. Are you coming down with us to the river, Kinnardthon?”

“You had better, Merle,” said Jack—his deep, powerful voice ringing out in strong contrast to his friend's lisping tones. “It'll do you a heap more good than loafing about town. Take a spell at the oars to put some blood into your face, old chap. That's the best medicine by a long shot—aunt it, Middlemist?”

“I dare say it is,” Merle answered, with a faint smile. It was wonderful how little he was changed from his boyish self: just the same small, slenderly made fellow, with the same pale, nervous face; the black eyes, rather less large and hollow-looking than of yore; and a soft little fringe of moustache beginning to shade the weak, unpleasant mouth, always his worst point. “But unfortunately I have some reading to do; and of all tough customers, that old Thucydides is the toughest. What earthly good his

perusal is supposed to effect in a country curate's parochial duties I don't know—do you?"

"Not I," said Jack. "Chuck the old beggar aside, and come down to the water. It's going to be no end of a fine evening, and we'll have a spin to Abingdon, get some prog at the hostelry, and walk back."

"Let dogth delight to bark and bite, and Greek delight to bore!" chanted Middlemist. "Are you coming, Kinnardthor?"

"Thanks, no. I wish I could."

And the three Oxonians separated; Jack and Middlemist turning out of the High-street in the direction of the river.

"I don't like your couthin, Leyburn," observed Middlemist, as soon as they were out of hearing. "Never did, if you'll allow me to say so."

"You didn't wait to be allowed," said Jack, drily. "Why not?"

"Well—I don't extactly know. He aint a bit like you, ith he?"

"Thanks. An all-sufficient reason. I stand contented."

"And he never can look a fellow in the fathe. Haven't you notithed it?"

"No, I haven't; and I've looked him in the face for the last seventeen years, I know."

"That's the reathon, then. You've got uthed to him, you thee. I haven't, and he always giveth me the idea of a fellow who'th keeping thomething dark."

"So he is—he's keeping himself. I say, don't go abusing the little beggar, Middlemist. The reading men have their line, and we've ours. There's no need to run foul of one another; and Merle has a better headpiece on his shoulders than you or I."

"Thpeak for yourthelf, Goliath. My headpiece ith inferior to none in Oxford's clathic walls; and ath for *abuthe*, the wortht thing I wath going to thay ith that I think Kinnardthor more likely to be writing thathires for the 'Thcourger' than reading Thuthydides."

Middlemist was as wrong in his surmise as people generally are. Merle was not engaged in either of the avocations suggested. On the contrary, as soon as the two men were out of sight he crossed the High-street, and turning into a narrow street, entered a small bookseller's shop, the window of which was chiefly filled with curious and dusty old volumes of bygone centuries, quaint manuscripts, and faded engravings. A white-

haired old man, bent and sickly looking, but of exceeding respectability in appearance, rose from behind the counter at his entrance, and appeared to know Merle as a frequent customer; for he smiled and said, "I hope I see you well, sir," before asking in what he could serve him.

"Very well, I thank you, Bruce," Merle answered; and his voice was both soft and courteous—a marked contrast, indeed, to the free and easy style so much in vogue among our lads nowadays. "I only looked in to see if—if that pamphlet had been found."

"What pamphlet, sir?"

"One by Stukely on the neglect of antiqui—but your daughter will know. She kindly promised to see if you had it among your stock."

"I don't think I have, sir. Stukely—Dr. Stukely—let me see—that will be in the year—"

"Somewhere between 1760 and '65; but if Miss Bruce has not found it, don't trouble yourself about it to-day."

"My daughter is out, sir; but I am sure I have not got it. I could ha' told her so if she had asked me; but girls are so foolish. There is nothing else I could serve you with, sir?"

"Nothing, thanks, Bruce; and it doesn't matter about the pamphlet. I only wanted it as a reference. Good evening."

"Good evening, Mr. Kinnardson, sir."

Nothing could well be more gentle and polite than Merle Kinnardson's manner with his inferiors. It was little wonder that he "took," as the saying is, so well with the lower orders—not one of whom would have dreamt of cavilling at his expression, as Mr. Middlemist elected to do before Jack snubbed him; and yet his eyes and mouth had never shifted more uneasily than during the couple of minutes in which he stood talking to David Bruce over the counter. Probably, like most overworked students, Merle's nerves were habitually unstrung. We have seen that he was not even willing to snatch an hour's relaxation from the worship of Thucydides.

Thucydides, strangely enough, led him away from Magdalen's grey and solemn walls, and out into the quiet meadows beyond the town. Here the air was sweet and cool, the Cherwell twinkled by between its reedy banks; and underneath a tuft of willows, Merle caught sight of a bright patch

of scarlet and lilac, making a pretty contrast to the subdued grey-green of the landscape.

Thucydides!

But bound more gaily than is the manner of that learned historian.

Treading softly but swiftly over the elastic turf, Merle came behind this spot of colour, and laid both hands gaily on the shoulders of a pretty girl in a lilac stuff dress, a scarlet dust shawl, pinned scarf-wise on her shoulder with a little gilt brooch, and a saucy-looking sailor hat, set jauntily on the knot of auburn curls: altogether a very bright-looking little damsel, who cried out and fluttered under his grasp; then, seeing who it was, first glowed like a rose, and next pouted like a pigeon, and tried to free herself.

"Let me alone, Mr. Kinnardson. How you startled me. I thought no one would be coming this way so late."

"And that was why you were here, eh, Minnie?" Merle said, laughing, and turning the face to him that he might take a kiss from the reluctant, rosy lips.

"I suppose I may walk where I like," she answered, pettishly, and still writhing away from him; "and I was just rising to go home when you came up."

"Then I am just in time to escort you, that is—if you will allow me, Miss Bruce," Merle answered, laughing still.

She turned round on him, her eyes flashing like wet violets.

"Don't tease me! I can't bear to be laughed at, and called *Miss Bruce*!"

"Then why should I be called Mr. Kinnardson? Nay, Minnie," dropping his bantering tone now he saw she was really vexed, "why are you so angry with me? Did you think I was wilfully late?"

"You said five o'clock, and I've been here nearly two hours. I thought you never was coming at all, it got so late," the girl murmured—her anger melting at once, and her mouth no longer refusing the kiss of peace, as he drew her to him, saying softly—

"My poor little Minnie, it really was a shame; but I couldn't help it, indeed. Sit down here, and I'll tell you all about it."

"Oh, no, Mr. Merle—I can't, indeed. I'll hardly be back now to get supper ready in time; and father can't bear me being out after dusk."

"Not if I am taking care of you, Minnie?"

"Ah, Mr. Merle, if he knew!"

"Wouldn't there be a row, eh? Never mind, childie; he won't know, so there's no need to tremble. And you must sit down a minute or two," gently pressing her down on to a root of the largest willow tree, and flinging himself on the grass beside her; "or I shall think you don't care to see me now I am come."

"What made you so late, though?" she asked, not answering the last words save by a sufficiently expressive blush and smile.

"Two things. First, an irruption of fellows in my rooms—"

"A *what*?" she interrupted, staring.

"A lot of college fellows in my room, whom I couldn't get rid of; and secondly, the family affection of my cousin, who would keep me talking in the middle of the High."

"He's a handsome fellow, that cousin of yours," the girl said, meditatively, as she twisted a slender willow twig round and round her fingers.

"Handsome *than his* cousin by a long chalk? True, Minnie;" and Merle reddened darkly, though his tone was playful enough.

"No, indeed!" Minnie cried, stretching out her hand with a woman's quick instinct for healing pain. "Not to me, nor no one but those as cares for size more than looks. He's got an honest sort o' face, that's all I meant."

"Why, my dear child, don't you suppose I'm well aware of my ugliness? Not that Jack is much of a beauty either."

"Father says beauty is only skin deep," Minnie persisted, awkwardly eager to soothe her friend's vanity.

"And copy books say, 'Honesty is the best policy.' By the way, that reminds me, Minnie, I had to tell such a heap of crams to your father this evening."

"To father!" the girl repeated, paling visibly.

"Why, what a little goose it is! Your hand is fluttering like a leaf, child. You see, as I was so late, I thought you might have got tired of waiting and gone home."

"As if I could!" she whispered quickly.

"Dear little woman! But, you see, I didn't want to have my walk for nothing; so I just looked into the shop to see if you were there, and espied your father instead."

"Oh! and what did you say to him?"

"Inquired about a pamphlet, my dear, which you were to have found for me—Dr. Stukely's essay 'On the Neglect of English Antiquities' (mind you don't forget if he asks you), and was very particular about the date. Really, Minnie, when you recollect that I had forgotten all about the existence of that worthy antiquarian till your respected parent asked me what I wanted, I think you must give me credit for having some wits about me."

Minnie Bruce seemed to see the matter in another light; for she said nothing, and her face clouded painfully. Merle's head was thrown back on his crossed arms; and his eyes had no wavering in them as they feasted on the prettily flushed face above them. He saw the change there directly, and asked—

"Well, Minnie, what is it?"

"Only that I can't bear to tell father lies, or have you do it. He's so fond of me; and—and it isn't right."

"What *is* right?" Merle asked, cynically, his head still resting lazily on his arm.

"Nothing that I do now, I think," Minnie answered, with a short sob of pain; "but I'd like to keep from lying, anyways—I would indeed."

"*Lying* is not a pretty word for a young woman to use," said Merle, lightly, though he frowned too, and altered his position to a sitting one. "You are always wishing to be a lady, Minnie; let me advise you to begin by dropping that expression—young ladies never use it."

"Nor never need to do it, I suppose," the girl answered, simply. "Oh! why—" in a sudden burst of sorrow, "why do you make me, then?"

"Really, my dear girl, I did not come here to be reproached for covering your absence with a white fib," Merle answered, with a sort of cold anger which subdued the child—she was only seventeen—at once. "It seems rather late to go on the high moral tack now; but, of course, if you wish to do so, and even to go to your father and inform him of the whole story of our acquaintance, you are quite at liberty to do so; only in that case," and the young man's face suddenly hardened into a smile which was not pleasant to see, "you must allow me to suggest that we say adieu to each other at once and for ever."

He had risen as he spoke, knowing of

course that nothing was farther from the maiden's thoughts than the course he suggested; but hardly prepared for her look of white dismay, nor to have his hand clutched in both her little palms, small and dimpled as a lady's, though not so white. "Merle, Merle, don't speak to me so!" she sobbed out. "You know I couldn't do that—nor nothing else to vex you. Oh! don't be angry with me. I'd cut off my head to please you if you wanted it, I love you so. It's only because you're so dear to me that I care about your telling stories. What would it matter to me in another man? but I can't bear you to do nothing that would vex you later to think on, and for my sake, too. Merle, do forgive me."

He had put his arms around her, and was trying to soothe her by tender little words and caresses; only when she asked his forgiveness so humbly, the young man's better nature sent the blood in a scarlet flood over his pale face, and he laid his hand on her mouth to stop her.

"Hush, Minnie! My darling, it is you who should forgive me. What a heartless fellow I am! My poor little pet!" and he lifted her two hands to his lips, kissing them so passionately that he brought the colour into her cheeks.

"Don't speak of yourself that way, Merle. I'd rather far you said ill of me. You're no such thing, and you know it."

"I wish to Heaven I did," he answered, bitterly. "Child, you are trembling still. Sit down again, and give me your hand. Yes, only for a minute. You mustn't go home with that pale face, my sweet white birdie."

What other undergraduate could use such pretty words? Minnie would have risked anything rather than cross his pleasure again just then; and so the minute lengthened itself into ten, and even more. The crickets came out and chirped their evening chorus. A light breeze swept over the limpid path of the river, ruffling its surface with a long, trembling kiss, bending the tall reeds in lowly homage, tangling the black and auburn locks which hung so close together, and sending a faint perfume of violets and fresh-turned earth into their owners' nostrils. Every young twig and leaf in the willow seemed to give out its own faint, sweet fragrance, and mingle with the subtler breath of the rank trails of wild ivy underfoot. There was no sound but the plash, plash of

the river against its grassy banks; the sough of the breeze through the boughs overhead; and the tick, tick, tick of the crickets among the grass and mosses. Bit by bit the red faded out of the sky; and cool grey shadows crept into it instead, and slowly, slowly stole along the silent meadows. Before their step the pale primroses folded their yellow arms, and slept beneath the wrinkled shelter of their deep-veined leaves. Merle gathered a tuft of wild hyacinth; but it, too, had closed its white bells; and far, very far away a church clock struck eight.

"Good heavens!" cried Merle—"how late it is. Now, if I have got you a scolding I shall never forgive myself."

Minnie smiled. She knew too well that no hurry would avail her now—had known it even while he was combating her persuasions to be allowed to go home; but girls in love are more generous than men. She only said—

"It don't matter. Father is never very angry, and I am generally punctual, you know, Mr. Merle."

"Mr. Merle? What did we agree just now, Minnie? You called me Merle of your own accord not so long ago."

Minnie laughed and tied on her hat.

"I forgot; and—and it doesn't sound proper, somehow. I'm afraid—"

"Afraid, Minnie? Did you never hear 'perfect love casteth out fear'?"

"In the Bible? Yes; but indeed, Merle, I think my love is perfect."

"Indeed, I think it is," he answered, gazing down into the innocent face upturned to his in the soft evening light. "I wish to God—" The sentence had no finish, and when he spoke again it was in a different tone. "Have you been reading the Byron I gave you, Minnie?"

"Yes, Merle, I've nearly got through it."

"Got through it! My dear child, don't talk as if it were a lesson book. You ought to linger over one piece again and again till you have got the full beauty of it into your soul. Don't you like it?"

"Oh, yes! I think it's lovely: lovelier than anything I ever fancied. I wonder why father never would let me read it before. He's so fond of reading himself. Perhaps he thought I were too young to understand it; and maybe I was before I knew you."

"Have I made you older, then, Minnie?"

Merle asked, with a keen pang of self-reproach.

"Yes," she said, simply, "and happier. Oh, so much. I don't understand half what I read yet; but at least I can feel when the people love one another as you and I do."

"You pretty Psyche!" said Merle, smiling on her. "And so I have given you a soul."

"I've just been reading 'Lara,'" the girl went on prattling; "and how grand and mysterious it is, isn't it? I can't the least guess who he was—can you? I wish you'd tell me, for I like him so, and Kaled! Oh, Merle, I feel I could do for you whatever she did for him. Didn't she love him just!"

"My dear girl," cried Merle, laughing uncontrollably, and greatly to his companion's surprise and displeasure—"for goodness' sake, don't say that to any other man. Though what do you know of such things, you baby? There now, don't look offended. What have I said to hurt you?"

"It isn't likely I'd talk so to any other man," said the girl, pouting; "and I know I'm a fool to talk about poetry to you, who are so clever; but you needn't to laugh at me quite so loud, for all that."

They had reached the last stile now, and vaulting over, Merle lifted Minnie lightly down into the lane on the farther side; then looking back at the quiet beauty of the evening landscape, he held her hand closer, while he murmured softly—

"It is the hour when from the boughs
The nightingale's high note is heard;
It is the hour when lovers' vows
Seem sweet in every whispered word;
And gentle winds and waters near
Make music to the lonely ear.
Each flower the dews have lightly wet;
And in the sky the stars are met,
And on the wave a deeper blue,
And on the leaf a browner hue;
And in the heaven, that clear obscure,
So softly dark and darkly pure,
Which follows the decline of day,
As twilight melts beneath the moon away."

"That's very, very pretty," Minnie said, as the Oxonian's low, rich voice died into silence. "Did you make it yourself?"

"I make it! No, indeed. You haven't read 'Parisina' yet, I see."

"Paris—? No."

"Read it to-night, then—it isn't long. And—and, Minnie, you needn't linger over the verses this time."

It must be allowed that Merle Kinnardson was not neglectful of his fair friend's education. If you elect to blame him for filling a little girl's head with poetry and ideas which could do her no good, and would probably do her much harm, I will simply give you his own reasons for so doing; and the reasons of a future pillar of the Church are not to be despised. "I would not recommend such works to any other young girl that I know—certainly not to any fashionable boarding-school little miss; but Minnie is too innocent to take any harm from them, and so will just enjoy the beauty, and pass by the evil unconsciously."

Our young men, though wise in their generation, are yet apt to forget that the guilelessness they admire is not a toy to be played with. Handle it too much, and it soon melts away altogether. Principle is an oak, which will weather out many a bitter tempest; innocence, but a tender flower, whose white petals wither beneath the careless touch of a man's hot finger.

They were in the outskirts of the town now, and Merle stopped and looked about him apprehensively.

"I suppose you musn't go any further with me," Minnie said, noticing his glance.

"I suppose not; and yet—I hate to say good-bye. It wouldn't do for us to be seen, would it? If you hadn't got on that red thing, now—" touching her shawl impatiently. "What on earth do you wear it for? Why, I saw it a mile off among the willows."

"To keep me warm," Minnie answered, quietly; though her cheeks flamed high with mortification at the contempt manifested for her poor little finery—finery donned, too, on purpose to make herself pretty in Merle's eyes.

That young man, however, not being quick enough at reading women's feelings to discern the annoyance he had inflicted, answered—

"To keep you warm! Well, I shouldn't think there was much warmth in that flimsy thing; and anyway, a black or brown one would do that as well."

"Black! why, that 'ud look very gloomy," Minnie answered, horrified. "I thought you would have liked this, Merle," her voice falling childishly.

"Oh, yes, it's a very jolly little thing, you know," said Merle, beginning to perceive

he had given offence, only not willing to give up the point. "But I don't think a black shawl gloomy, do you? My cousin En— Miss Leyburn, always wears black jackets out of doors. Young ladies don't like to be conspicuous, you know."

"I dare say they don't," replied Miss Bruce, suddenly ungrateful for Merle's educational efforts; and allowing her wistful meekness to evaporate before his bungling mention of a cousin. What girl likes to hear another quoted as a model for herself by the man she loves? "But you see, I'm not a young lady, and don't know nothing of what they like or don't like. You never told me you had a girl cousin before," very sharply. "Does she live near you at home?"

"She lives with me," said Merle; "at least, I live with her father. You're not offended with me, are you, Minnie?"

"Offended—no, of course not. Is your cousin pretty?"

"H'm—I don't know." Merle was ready to bite his lips with vexation at having mentioned one of the women of his family to this little plebeian friend. "Well, dear, I must be off now. Get home quickly, and don't let any one speak to you on the way."

"Not if I can help it. I couldn't stop you, though, that first time."

"You must not be so kind to other people now, please," said Merle, jealously. "No, darling, I was only joking. I know you won't. And Minnie!—be at the willows at the same time to-morrow, will you?"

"Not to-morrow, Merle, I can't. Father will give me a scolding to-night, I know; and I daren't risk to-morrow again."

"I am risking more for you, Minnie," said Merle, coldly. "However, just as you like; only don't accuse me of *seeking* other girls' society, if you are not willing to give me yours. I shall go to tea at Dr. Cormick's. His daughters are very jolly girls; and a man can't be always over his books."

"I will come, Merle," the girl answered, very quietly. "Good night now."

But somehow her lover's kiss did not meet so willing an acceptance as earlier in the evening. They were lovers, and they had been rather more than an hour together. Can you count how many times each had been on the verge of a quarrel with the other? Verily, "*Le premier soupir del'amour est le dernier de la sagesse.*"

CHAPTER VIII.

MINNIE'S OTHER LOVER.

"SO here you are at last, my girl," said David Bruce sharply, as he answered the door in reply to the girl's timid knock. "And now, will you tell me where you've been till this hour of the night? and no one to get supper, nor nothing!"

He looked very angry, as was perhaps natural, standing there with the door in one hand, and a smoky oil lamp in the other; and Minnie, whose nerves had been shaken by finding the door fastened against the possibility of her slipping in unnoticed, felt the colour deserting her cheek at the tone and frown with which her father, usually so gentle, received her. She was not a very brave little girl at the best of times, as was evident from her submission to Merle Kinnardson; and the consciousness of wrongdoing made her more fearful still; for David Bruce, though a particularly quiet, affectionate man, was strict and even severe in his mode of bringing up the motherless girl left to his care. He had little tolerance for anything in the shape of what he was pleased to term "gallivanting." Even this, however, was more pardonable than the faintest approach to deceit, a vice held in the uttermost abomination by the rigid old Scotchman; and Minnie, knowing this, would have given anything—anything but Merle's love, at least—to have told the simple truth, that she had been taking a walk with the man whom she (poor little, simple fool!) looked on as her future husband. The latter's wrath, however, at the mere idea of such a proceeding had effectually driven the hope of candour from Minnie's mind. It was better to sin, she thought, than risk such another speech from Merle; and so, pale and stammering, she faltered out some bungling excuse about "not knowing it was so late."

"Not know it was so late!" repeated Mr. Bruce, with irate scorn. "Perhaps you thought the sun was shining still; or perhaps you've supped out, and don't think me or Mr. Evans wants anything to eat after our day's work. Young women as can afford to gallivant the streets in a mass of stuck-up finery—" glancing indignantly at the scarlet shawl and sailor hat—"from three o'clock in th' afternoon to nigh on nine at night, can't be expected to think o' such homely things as getting a bit o' supper

and a bright fire ready for their fathers, who've been toiling and moiling in the shop all day."

This was the second attack poor Minnie's gay clothes had received in one hour; and she began to wish heartily that she had kept to her ordinary drab gown and shepherd's plaid shawl. Under these circumstances, she hailed almost as an angel from Heaven the appearance on the scene of a long, awkwardly-built young man, in very stiff-fitting clothes, who, emerging from another door at the end of the passage, gave utterance to the double wish "that Mr. Bruce wouldn't take him into account, and that Miss B. was quite blooming."

Now, in the general course of events, this Mr. Evans was Minnie's special *bête noir*; and to be called "Miss B." roused her wrath in no slight measure. This evening, however, he proved so delightful a refuge from her father's anger that she smiled on him quite sweetly, and hastened to give him her hand, and assure him that she "didn't know he was expected. Indeed, she was very sorry to be so late; but she had been across the fields to—see a friend."

Happy thought! She had escaped a falsehood!

Mr. Bruce was very near bursting out again with the remark that "if she couldn't come home from seeing her friends in decent time, instead of galloping about the streets in the middle of the night, she had better not come home at all." But the sudden remembrance that it was not his interest to depreciate his daughter to this visitor, brought the remark to an untimely pause, somewhere in the middle; and slipping by the guest, Minnie hurried into the parlour beyond, flung her hat and shawl on to a chair, and proceeded to straighten a very untidily laid cloth on the small centre table, and to spread it with bread, cheese, beer, and a piece of cold meat, in honour of the guest; first stirring up the smouldering fire, and giving it a blow between whiles till it burst into quite a cheerful blaze, and Mr. Evans was driven to express his opinion that "Miss B.'s very presence imparted a sort o' glow to the surroundings."

David Bruce only grunted at first, then recollected himself anew, and observed with an effort, that "the girl did make the place homelike; it were for that reason he missed her so indeed when she didn't come home to time. There was an old

woman come in every day to char and cook; but she was no great count, and he couldn't eat his meals in comfort without Minnie were there to set the table and serve him."

Poor Minnie took this as a sign that she was forgiven, and ventured a grateful smile at her father as she repeated her regrets for being late; but Mr. Bruce shot her such a severe, not to say withering, glance, that she saw plainly that the kindness was intended not for her but for the visitor, and her heart quite sank before the unctuous tone in which Mr. Evans remarked that "he wasn't fond o' late hours himself; but perhaps it was well for Mr. Bruce to use hisself to doing without Miss B. now and again, for he couldn't expect to keep such as her for long."

"I fear not—I fear not," said David with a sadness quite unfeigned; for Minnie was indeed the apple of his eye. "I often wish as I had had two girls instead o' one."

"You've got a son," observed Mr. Evans, consolingly.

"Ah, yes, poor laddie—but he's away at sea; an' anyhow boys aren't girls. There's nothing like a woman in the house; and I don't know what I'll do when Minnie leaves me."

"I'm not going to leave you, father—not for ever so long, any way," said Minnie, with a lively recollection of the years which must elapse before Merle could afford to marry—he having frequently alluded to himself as being in the depths of poverty.

"Ah—girls always say that," answered her father, looking at her more kindly. "But it don't last—do it, Evans? A young man's face soon puts father's nose out o' joint, eh?"

"But arter all, it's only seemly and accordin' to Scripture," said Mr. Evans, who was of a serious turn of mind. "You're making Miss B. blush, Mr. Bruce, whereas it aint the face" (though Mr. Evans gave an approving glance at his own in the little, dull, oblong mirror over the chimneypiece). "It's just this, the Lord calls 'em to wedlock and 'omes o' their own, and they has to go—hasn't they, Miss B.?"

"Not unless they like," said Minnie, sharply, her unwonted amiability towards the guest having passed off with the occasion for it.

"Not if they're called?" Mr. Evans per-

sisted, with a solemn expression on his fat, white face.

"Some girls get a good many calls," said Minnie, wilfully misunderstanding; "but they don't need to answer till they choose."

"But if the Lord chooses?" urged her admirer, more solemnly still; "an' if it's one o' 'is elect as offers to you, Miss B., you're pretty sartain he won't make the attempt till he's right down sure it is the Lord's ch'ice. You wouldn't shut your 'art against 'im, would you?"

"Of course she wouldn't," David Bruce answered, checking a pert rejoinder on his daughter's lips—"not if she's my daughter, as I believe she be; and hard as 'twould be to part from her, I'll not set my selfish comforts against her finding a happy home with some pious, God-fearing man in our own class."

"Then I'm sure I wouldn't leave you, father, for the piouesest man in the lot," cried Minnie; who with all her adoration for Merle knew this appellation hardly belonged to him, and was charmed at delivering a shot in Mr. Evans's direction, as a punishment for his persistence. Unfortunately, however, her hurried walk combined with this little attack of temper to make Minnie's cheeks so rosy, and her big, brown eyes so bright, that Mr. Evans's dull little orbs rested on her more in carnal admiration than reproof; and it was with a faint sigh of excuse for his own weakness, more than hers, that he said—

"Ah, girls never mean 'alf they say, do they, Mr. B.? Their lips is more thoughtless than their 'arts by a long chalk."

"And Minnie always was a careless-spoken little thing," said the father. "That reminds me, child, one of the 'Varsity young gents come in to-day, asking for a pamphlet you'd promised to look out for him—an eighteenth century one, by Dr. Stookely. Whatever were you thinking on to say we had it?"

Minnie's cheeks went crimson in a moment, and her eyes were nervously fixed on the bread she was crumbling. Her answer was quite inaudible.

"It was that young Mr. Kinnardson, of Maudlin," David Bruce went on. "I've had more than one bit o' custom from him; an' he's a much decenter, quiet-spoken lad than most of the cut of 'Varsity gents. Don't come here on shaller pretences to stand gaaping at you, or dawdling at th'

counter to make goose speeches to you when my head's turned t'other way. I were quite sorry to disappoint him; for he's one o' the reading lot, he is. There aren't many pamphlets, and they're all ticketed to date. Why couldn't you ha' looked among 'em at once?"

Crimsoner than ever Minnie's cheeks, and her downcast eyes moist with shame, and pain, and pleasure at the paternal praise of her prudent and cautious lover.

Mr. Evans thought he had never seen a fairer face, and resolved not to beat about the bush any longer. As Minnie, whispering some feeble excuse about "not thinking," rose to clear the table—her little hands looking, by the way, much more pink and white than when lying in Merle's pale, well-shaped fingers—the young man leant across the table, and observed—

"I'd like a little serious talk with you to-night, Mr. Bruce, if so be you're agreeable."

"Surely. By all means. Minnie, child, you may as well wash up them things now instead o' leaving them till to-morrow."

"I'm sure I haven't the least kear about Miss B.'s hearing all I has to say," put in the wooer, politely.

"And I'm sure Miss Bruce hasn't the least curiosity to hear it," replied the young lady, as, having lighted her father's pipe and lifted the tray, she fluttered out of the room with it.

How glad she was to leave them! How unspeakably dull and tedious seemed an evening in that little back room, with its smoky brown walls, its worn druggist and shabby furniture, after that twilight hour away in the Cherwell meadows, with the evening star shining out in the pale blue sky, and Merle's face turned up to her from the grasses at her feet! How unspeakably vulgar and distasteful the conversation of Daniel Evans after that of the young Oxonian; and how well she knew what attraction led the former to her father's modest dwelling, when plenty of the richer tradespeople would have given an "open sesame" to the first butcher in Oxford's only son!

A *butcher's* son and Merle Kinnardson!

Good heavens, what profanation!

Not that Daniel Evans wore a blue shirt himself, or carried a wooden tray full of gory-looking joints to the houses of his different customers; but he sat in a little glass partitioned-off place in one corner of the shop, where he gave out change and

made up the various accounts. His hands, particularly his thumbs, looked as if they were cut out of clean, raw beef. His face was round, white, and embellished at frequent intervals with coruscations of red spots, giving him the appearance of unwholesome pork; though Mrs. Evans, senior, was wont to declare that "it were nothin' constitootional, fur an 'ealthier babby than her Dan'el ye 'couldn't ha' wished to see." A list of charms which was culminated by Minnie's sturdy declaration that he "*smelt* of meat;" and that his hair, which was very short, looked as if he greased it by frequent rubbings against the fat loins of mutton hanging round his father's shop.

What, marry a man with that sanguinary perfume, even though his father could give him a thousand pounds to-morrow, to start with! Never!

Mr. Bruce, however, did not seem to see the matter in the same light; and poor Minnie had been frequently troubled of late by his complimentary allusions to young Evans's merits; and still more by an ominous friendliness on the part of Mrs. Evans, who had taken to inviting her to come to tea and bring her work, sending Dan'el home with her in the evening, and even calling herself to take her to chapel; marks of cordiality which, when given to a pretty girl by the mother of an only and marriageable son, are always painfully suggestive of matrimonial prospects in the distance. Now, unfortunately, Minnie rather liked Mrs. Evans, and found it exceedingly difficult to avoid being patronized by the good dame, who was quite a grand person among her own class; wore a brown silk dress, just the colour of pork crackling, on week days, and a black ditto on Sundays; had the best pew in the Rev. Elijah Potsden's chapel at the corner of Ship-street, and always put a two-shilling piece in the plate when she took the sacrament. Minnie herself preferred the Church service; indeed, since she had known Merle, she had grown quite "high" in her theology, stitched Roman collars for the future wearing of her idol, went to church now and then on week days, and had even made two or three efforts to shirk eating her meat on Fridays; all of which would have seemed rank papistry to the Evanses, who belonged to the "elect Methodists," spoke of their neighbours as "carnal people," and themselves as "professing

Christians," and indeed professed so loudly that some of the said neighbours were ill-natured enough to declare that they had little of Christianity *but* the profession.

Under these circumstances, therefore, the reflection that Daniel Evans was probably proposing for her while she was washing up the supper things in the dreary, fireless little kitchen, which the charwoman before-mentioned had left in a particularly damp and dirty condition, was not pleasant. To speak the truth, however, she was too thankful for having escaped to trouble her head with what Mr. Evans might be doing in her absence; and, having finished her work, she slipped quietly past the parlour door, and so up the steep, uncarpeted stairs to her own room—a poorly furnished little attic enough, with a sloping roof, and neither fireplace nor carpet; but a small paradise to Minnie, for here she could think of Merle, pray for him and sing little hymns in his glory as long as ever she pleased; and here hung her mother's picture, painted in oils by a provincial artist, and representing a very stiff and yellow-looking wooden doll, with a rose in her bosom not unlike a red tea-cup; and two polished bands of black hair, making a tall Gothic arch over an impossibly high forehead, and a little Saxon arch over either round, pink ear. Here, too, was her Bible, with a photograph of Merle for a marker; and her shabby little desk, at which she used to write him a shabby little note now and then, in very thin, weak handwriting, with very pale ink; and which contained sundry notes and verses of an amatory and rather full-flavoured order from the young gentleman himself; besides certain dried flowers, a pair of lavender kid gloves, a bonbon box, rather sticky, and a little coral heart on a blue ribbon, all gifts from her admirer at one time or another. And here, outside the window, was a little patch of lead from which (joy of joys!) she could see the spire of Magdalen Chapel; and on which she could sit and dream of him who worshipped therein, and read the books he lent her, in a blissful content beyond all words.

There she betook herself now. The moon was just turning her favourite spire to silver; and as it rose majestically above a tall stack of dark-red chimneys, Minnie's whole heart went with her eyes, as she murmured—

"God bless you, my love—God keep you!

What are you doing now, I wonder? Looking at the moon too, perhaps, and thinking of me. I told you, when it was on the spire I always thought on you." And she even smiled at her white and glistening Mecca, and kissed her plump little hand to it, very much to the astonishment of a dissipated black cat, who was just starting on his nocturnal rambles, and had taken Minnie's murmurings for the affectionate purring of a maiden tabby.

You see, little Miss Bruce had not the gift of the "*diable boiteux*," otherwise she might have suspended her juvenile coo-coos before the sight of Merle arrayed in very correct evening dress, and stooping over the shoulder of a very *crêpe* and pearl-powdery young lady, while she sang one of his own songs to an admiring audience.

"What the eye does not see, the heart does not grieve at;" and Minnie—having made a romantic little picture, in her mind, of Merle "*planté*" in front of his window, with her photograph (a wretched affair, with one eye a blur, and the mouth all out of focus) in his hand, and a heart full of more than Conrad's yearning for Medora, sending forth sighs in the direction of the original—was perfectly happy as, seating herself on the window-sill, she proceeded to take her first dips into "*Parisina*" by the light of the moon.

She did not progress very far. Merle had set her the task—Merle interrupted it.

The first paragraph recalled at once his mode of repeating it—the low, sweet tones of his voice, and the dreamy look in his deep, dark eyes. How she would have glared if any one had called him ugly in her presence! Ugly! Why, to her he was a very god—the Apollo Belvidere—whose every movement was grace, every tone music. Her heart went back to the very day when he first came into the shop, and delayed, drawing her into talk over a dusty old book which he came to purchase. How often he had been there since!—much oftener when David was out, and she serving, than at other times; and how soft and pleasant his manner had always been, "like as though she were a lady." That country lane, too, where he met her one day, and stopped to ask the way to a village quite in the opposite direction to which he was going—yes, exactly opposite; for he had to turn back and go her road, walking beside her and making her quite forget her shyness and

timidity by his easy, gentle manner of chatting, till he had drawn out most of her little habits, and notably that she generally walked alone and countryways, because father didn't care to have her dawdling in the town, and father was very particular.

Ah, it was very wrong! He had often laughed over it since, and told her the village was only a blind to make her acquaintance—a successful blind, for that was the beginning of the end. She never could recollect the easy steps by which their friendship grew and grew till he had won her love, aye, and forced her to confess it one sunny autumn evening when all the corn was gold about them, and all among their feet grew scarlet poppies and blue cornflowers in a wildering blaze of glory. “My own, my darling little girl!” he had said, then taking her suddenly in his arms and— Well, all was over then. She was his own, heart and soul; and if he had toiled so long to make her so, why not let him see it? Was he not her own also? and when this fancy for secrecy was over, would not her father be his? and—

“Minnie, where are you?”

It was her father's voice, and she had got no further than that opening verse of “*Parisina!*” Springing lightly from her moonlit perch, she thrust the book under her pillow, and opening the door, called out—

“Yes, father—d'you want me?”

“Aye, child—why not? And so does some one else, too. Come down and bid Daniel Evans good night; here he is, a-waiting on purpose.”

There was something unusually lively in David's tone—something suggestive of the future father-in-law in his mention of Mr. Evans's Christian name. It went like a lump of ice to Minnie's heart; and with the instinct of putting off an evil she could not avoid altogether, she began to slip off her clothes, calling out—

“I can't come, father—I'm undressing for bed.”

“Oh, nonsense,” began David, “put on your gown and—” but Daniel's voice floated greasily up the stairs in smooth interruption.

“Don't dream to ill-convenience yourself on my account, Miss B.; 'taint the least account—no, Mr. Bruce, 'taint really. I'll call in again to-morrow night; an' I dare say mother 'll look round furst. So good night, sir, and Gawd bless you. Good night, Miss B.”

“Good night,” said Minnie sharply; then sotto voce—“Ugh! you hateful wretch, I can't bear you,” and stamped her little, bare foot on the floor in childish wrath. A sound of the front door being bolted followed, and then her father called again.

“Minnie, have you got more n' your gown off?”

“And my shoes and stockings, father.”

“Put on your slippers, and wrap a shawl round you, then. I want to speak to you.”

When father used that tone, Minnie knew he meant to be minded; wherefore, much contre cœur, the young woman bundled up her pretty round figure in a big shawl, and went down to the little parlour, where was a fume of whiskey and tobacco smoke, with David Bruce walking up and down in the midst of it. When the fair young face appeared in the haze, however, he sat down in his old leathern chair, and drew the girl on to a stool at his feet, saying, kindly—

“Poor little lassie! Ye look as if ye feared a scolding, Minnie; but it's not I will give you many more, so prink up your cheeks a bit. I'm not fond o' being hard on you, am I?”

“No, indeed, father,” said Minnie, laying her cheek on his knee in a little heart-gush of remorseful affection; “not half as hard as I deserve.”

“Let be—let be. You've been a good enough child to me, and loth I am to lose you.”

“You aren't going to, father.”

“Indeed and I think I am; and soon too, if somebody gets his way. What d'you think young Evans was saying to me this evening?”

“I don't know, nor care neither,” said the girl, sharply, and reddening like a rose.

“Now, Minnie, for shame! You're vexed at my sending you out o' the room; but that wasn't his fault. I guessed he wanted to ask you of me to wed; and so he did, child, so he did.”

“And I hope you told him, father, that you wouldn't hear on such a thing. Me marry Daniel Evans, indeed!”

And the girl's voice rose in indignation at the idea.

“Why not, daughter?” Daniel asked, wondering, but stern, too. “Surely you've seen as he's cared for you this long time back?”

“Yes, father; and he's seen I don't care for him.”

"But why not, child? He's a worthy, Christian young man—a good son, and will make a good husband."

"Not to me, father. I don't want him. I don't want to leave you, father, please."

"Tut, tut, girls always say that. Why, it's long been a heavy weight on my mind who's to do for you when I'm gone. I'm old now, Minnie, and saving nothing. The shop hardly keeps us out of debt, and not that a' times."

"I can work, father; and I'm quite happy. Father, let me stay with you. I can't bear that there man. Don't look angry with me. It's no sin not to like a man; and I couldn't like Daniel Evans, if it was ever so."

Mr. Bruce did look at her, not angrily, but very gravely, as she sat panting and flushed like some bright-plumed little bird fluttering against the bars of a cage. When he spoke, his voice was very grave too, but kind still.

"Is there anybody else you like better, Minnie?"

Now, if she could but have obeyed her heart's prompting and told the truth; but truth was a hopeless luxury while Merle ruled, and her sick heart sank lower than her voice when she answered—

"Of course there are, father, lots o' people. I don't know one I like worse."

"I didn't know you'd so many friends among the young men, daughter. Can you tell me any one in particular that you like? Don't fear to speak frankly. I'll keep your secret, if it is a secret."

But Minnie, torn between two, and hating herself the while, only hung her head, and blushing deeply, muttered—

"'Twasn't one more than another."

"Is there any one that likes you, then? Come, Minnie, you've no cause to hesitate at answering *that*. All I want is your happiness: only be open with me, like a true-hearted, honest lass."

Ah, if she could—if she only could! And it was so hard to hold her tongue or lie, when he was so kind! Dropping her face on her knees, the girl faltered out the negative she detested, and burst into tears.

Daniel Bruce looked grieved and angry. He felt that there was something behind; and though he guessed it to be only some idle fancy, it grieved him that Minnie, so entreated, should shut him from her con-

fidence. When he next spoke, it was in his sternest tones.

"Dry your eyes, girl, and go to bed. You've no call to begin crying because an honest man likes you. I bade you speak the truth; and if you have, and there's no one you care for, or who cares for you, the sooner you set your mind on Dan'el Evans the better. Now go, and don't you stir out gadding to-morrow. I'll not have him or his mother come here arter you, an' not find you in."

How coldly he kissed her! Minnie's heart felt quite broken as, bare-footed and shivering, she crept quietly up the dark stairs, while the tears trickled fast and hot from her blue eyes, and over the dimpled cheeks Merle had kissed.

Father was angered now—angered and suspicious; but that was not all. He had forbidden her to go out on the morrow; and how, *how* was she to keep her appointment under the willows in the Cherwell meadows?

OFF THE TRACK IN NORWAY.—I.

IT is a long road with few turnings that leads from Christiania, through the valley of the Gudbrunsdalen, over the Dove Fjeld to Drontheim, the northern capital of Norway. One summer's day, the writer of this and a well-tried companion of his, whose name is well known in the Swiss Alps, were bowling along a stretch of this road in one of those curiously constructed carriages called "carrioles," which are licensed to carry one passenger, when suddenly the ever-welcome station came in view. For the information of those who have never travelled in Norway, it may perhaps be well to explain that these stations are, for the most part, farm-houses, situated at certain intervals along all the great roads of Norway, serving the purposes of inns, and also post-houses; the keepers of them being bound, in consideration for a fixed sum, to supply the traveller with horses to carry him on his journey. Into the yard of one of these stations, my friend and myself urged our reluctant steeds; and seeing a somewhat dusty and travel-stained individual leaning against a post, we took him for an ostler, and, summoning up the best Norwegian we could command, inquired if it were possible to obtain horses. To our surprise,

the dusty gentleman replied, in tolerable English—

"I do not know, but I tink you can. I am de priest of Lom. Will you come and stay with me?"

The invitation was somewhat sudden, coming as it did after an acquaintance of half a minute's duration; however, we replied that we should be very pleased to accept his hospitality if he would inform us in what part of the globe Lom was situated; whereupon our newly-found friend produced a map, and pointing to a tract of country right away in the mountains, said—

"There is my home."

Having agreed to visit him in it, we watched him spring into his carriage, wave his hand to us, and disappear in a cloud of dust. The little village of Lom, we soon discovered, was situated at the extremity of a great valley under the shadow of a mountain called Lomseggen, about forty miles from the main road, and sixty from where we then stood. After following the high road for a couple of stages or so, we came to a mountain track, which our map indicated would, if followed, bring us to the desired settlement.

On the following day, after having refreshed ourselves with a night's slumber, we set off to tramp the distance; but as the way was long, and the sun immoderately hot, we did not come in sight of the wished-for hamlet until the clock in the little Norse church of the place was chiming the midnight hour. Being in the month of July, it was still broad daylight in those northern latitudes, but no sign or sound of life was to be discovered in the village. The whole of the community were evidently sound asleep. The clergyman's house was the only pretentious dwelling place in the district, the rest being mere peasants' huts. Not liking to knock the worthy clergyman out of his slumbers, we resolved to go in search of a lodging for the night.

After following the track for half a mile or so, we came upon another cluster of cottages and sheds, but still could see no living thing, so the only course to pursue seemed to be to arouse the natives; accordingly my friend selected the door of one cottage, and I that of another, and commenced a series of knocks, which grew louder and louder as time went on and our impatience increased; but still we appeared to create no impression whatever, and only the echo of

our blows disturbed the serenity of the sleeping village. We tried kicks, we hollloed the one to the other to encourage perseverance, and generally made night hideous with discordant sounds; but the villagers were deaf to our cries, and despair began to take possession of our worn-out frames. Just, however, as we were thinking about returning to our clergyman's house, and throwing ourselves upon his forbearance, a window opened close to where I stood, and a girl's face looked out. Her hair, loose as Aphrodite's after her bath, and the white garment she wore, clearly indicated that she had but that moment risen from sweet repose. Putting on the most amiable smile I could muster for the occasion, I inquired, in what I considered to be very superior Norse, if we could sleep there that night, and was much gratified to receive in reply the pleasant monosyllable—

"Ja."

A minute or two afterwards the door was opened, and the owner of the face and hair stood before us, and bade us enter. The nymph led us along a passage into a room, in which two small compartments had been cut in the wall. In these apertures had been placed some hay, some skins, and some fleas, in—as we thought at the time—about equal proportions; but it is possible that we may have been somewhat led away by our feelings in regard to the quantity of the latter. However, tired limbs and easy consciences can sleep anywhere, and our rough bed of hay, of skins, of fleas became sweet to us as pure white sheets and eider-down.

We were aroused next morning by the entrance of the young friend who had admitted us, and who, clothed in the gay glory of her Sunday attire, brought us the cup of coffee which, in some form or other, is to be met with in the humblest and poorest cottage in all Norway. We made known to her that breakfast would be desirable, and gave her to understand that we would have anything she had in the house. Shortly a few pieces of what we had reason to believe had once been meat made their appearance; but from what species of animal the same had been hewn we could form no reasonable conjecture. It was nearly black, and tougher and drier than ordinary leather. On the table, by the side of this tempting dish, our Hebe placed a platter of the coarsest "flod brod" we had yet come across in Norway. Its appearance was

exactly that of a piece of bandbox mixed with scraps of hay. A pot of coffee completed the bill of fare; and upon this *ménu*, with all the relish we could muster, we fell to. It was some satisfaction, however, to be able to discharge our bill for board and lodging with the modest sum of sevenpence halfpenny each.

The village church, a very miniature affair indeed, stood a short distance from the priest's house, and there we expected to find the good man at his ministrations in the midst of his flock, as it was then between eleven and twelve o'clock on the Sunday morning; but on our presenting ourselves at the door of the small sanctuary, we found it closely locked, and clearly no service was going on within. A farm servant, however, came across to us from the priest's house, and by the help of signs gave us to understand that our friend, his master, had gone off to preach at one of his other churches some fourteen miles away, but would be back by five o'clock in the afternoon; and he further added that the good pastor was duly expecting us.

Having replied that we would call at the appointed hour, we crept into a shady place by the riverside to escape the tropical heat, and there by the side of a waterfall let the hours roll dreamily by. At five o'clock we again bent our steps to the parson's mansion, but found that the good man had not returned. We were, however, shown into the best room of the house, and thus had ample opportunity for examining the appurtenances of the place; but hunger speedily became the one paramount and absorbing subject with us. We were well-nigh famished with long abstinence, and the only speculation rife within us was the question of how much longer it would be possible to hold out before actual starvation set in. A sound of wheels upon the mountain track, however, soon revived our drooping spirits, and in a few minutes the door opened and our acquaintance of the roadside burst in upon us. Like a father welcoming home his long-lost sons, so did the good man receive us with outstretched hands and open heart. Talking very volubly in broken English, he lavished all manner of affectionate terms upon us, grasping our hands the while with a warmth of affection which was pleasant indeed. His good wife received us in like manner, as did also a blithe and bonny girl, his niece, and a good soul, the housekeeper.

Within half an hour of the arrival of the master of the establishment, we were all sitting down to a repast the like of which we have never seen before or since in Norway. To all intents and purposes we were out of the world of men and women, at the confines of a valley into which for eight months in the year the sun cannot penetrate; and yet, outspread upon the table were all the luxuries of civilization, all those delicacies which one would imagine were as alien to the Norwegian land as pomegranates to the soil of London streets. None the less were they enjoyable on that account, and our meal was, we fear, somewhat prolonged; but as Thackeray has it, "Even the Eastern Counties trains must come in at last," so it came to pass that even our stay at the table terminated after a time, and we went out with our clerical host to inspect the old homestead. A large farmhouse with rambling outbuildings and labourers' cottages stood in the midst of the priest's grounds. On three sides the everlasting hills with crowns of snow looked down. In places their sides were hard, steep, and bare; and in others gentle slopes, covered with the product of the labourers' toil, rose refreshingly towards the rocks above. In front of us Lomseggen, with his shroud of snow, looked down upon the jocund valley.

"On yonder crag," said our host, pointing to a promontory of Lomseggen, "tradition states, once stood Olaf, the Christian king, when gazing down upon the valley below, he vowed by his good sword that Odin and Thor should rule the hearts of men no longer; so, striding down into the Norsemen's village, he preached Christ with his sword, and all the men in that long valley, with trembling and with wonder, were baptized."

After our tour of inspection was over, we returned to the house and listened with charmed ears to the wondrous singing of the young girl whom I have before mentioned.

In almost every European language that young northern nightingale trilled out the songs of all nations; and as the Argonauts in old times listened with forgetful hearts and lulled energies to the singing of the sirens of the Northern Sea, so did we, on that halcyon evening, listen to the sweet melodies of that young Norwegian girl.

On the morrow we procured the services

of an old reindeer hunter to guide us along an unfrequented track over Galdho Piggen, the highest mountain in Norway, to the great Sonde Fjord, a distance of about ninety miles.

With exceeding difficulty we tore ourselves away from our kind entertainers, who one and all did what they could to persuade us to lengthen our stay indefinitely with them.

Ollé Ulverson, our guide, was a tough old hunter of reindeer, who having lived all his life on the Fjelds, as it were, was as capable as man could be to steer travellers straight through the vast and bewildering snow fields which cover the Sonde Fjeld. On one shoulder he carried his rifle, and on his back was strapped his knapsack, containing a certain amount of provender to sustain us on the journey.

After walking, scrambling, &c., for some dozen miles or so over rocks and through pine forests and desolate moors, we came upon a mountain pasture, in the centre of which stood a small soeter, or wooden hut. Pushing open the door and stooping down, we entered, and found ourselves in an apartment a few feet square. In one corner of the room was a large hearthstone, on which blazed a fire of wood, over which a vast kettle was suspended, attended to by a girl of some thirteen years' experience in the ways of life. The place had no flooring save the bare earth, and no furniture to speak of save a few pans. On the rafters overhead were placed a couple of boards, with a cowskin laid upon them. Presently a woman came in, and ladled out to us some hot milk, from which, with the help of a little flod brod, we made a hearty though somewhat liquid supper. Signs were then made to us to climb up on to the before-mentioned boards, and there rest for the night. With some difficulty my friend and myself accomplished the feat; and after wrapping ourselves in the skins, and with considerable ingenuity interlacing our limbs with each other to avoid rolling off, we proceeded to refresh ourselves with some hours' sleep.

Early next morning we set off to make the ascent of the Galdho Piggen, the king of the Scandinavian range, the Mont Blanc of Norway. Our party consisted of the before-mentioned reindeer hunter, a youth in training for a guide, and our two inexperienced selves.

THE ABDUCTION OF THE O'BANAGHER.

CHAPTER IV.

WHEN it became noised abroad in Ballymarun that the illustrious representative of that borough had mysteriously and completely disappeared, the excitement was very great. There had been vague rumours of it the day after the hunt, but nothing definite was known, and nothing foul suspected. The departure of police and military was an occurrence so very usual that it excited no comment; and the men themselves, being pledged to silence, divulged nothing. But on the morning following, the rumours had been crystallized into distinct items of intelligence. The heart of the community was stirred to its core; the tongue of the community wagged incessantly. The day after the hunt had been a day of heavy rain.

The storm had now cleared off, and a bright blue sky had spread itself over sea and land. A great bank of cloud, more dazzling white than driven snow, lay on the horizon. It was strange to contrast the still, eternal languor of the sea, the silent motion of the sail boats and the herring smacks, and the noiseless progress of an Atlantic steamer descried in the extreme distance, with the babble and confusion going on in the town. Men had turned their eyes from the blue sea, with its white-crested waves—had ceased to sniff the refreshing odour that was blown in on their town. They had left their unmended nets by the doors of the white cottages that overlook the sea. To-morrow would do to splice that oar splintered in last night's storm. The bottom of that boat could be tarred some other time. Women, too, had crossed the well-scrubbed thresholds, leaving their kitchens tenantless save of a toddler or so of three years' experience of this naughty world, or a domestic pig that, unforbidden, inserted his snout into the three-legged pot, devouring a meal destined for nicer stomachs. If you wanted to find the inhabitants of Ballymarun that morning, you would have to go to the market-place, where, in excited groups, they stood before the town hall; or to the High-street, where, in still larger numbers, they crowded round the windows of the *Bally-*

marin *Eagle* office, and round the door of Mr. Murphy's mansion.

The crowds round the town hall were engaged in discussing a formidable-looking placard which had been pasted over-night on the lintels and doorposts. It had been composed by the editor of the *Eagle*, and read as follows:—

"FOUL PLAY !

"Whereas, The O'Banagher is missing ; and whereas he was last heard of at Mrs. Connor's hotel, on the Isnagarran-road ; and whereas Foul Play is suspected. The inhabitants of this town and its vicinage are hereby earnestly requested to render every assistance in their power to those engaged in efforts to trace The O'Banagher, and to secure his captors. A full and interesting account of the circumstances, so far as they are known, attending the disappearance of our respected member is contained in this morning's edition of the *Eagle*. To be obtained at the office, High-street, and from all respectable booksellers.

"PRICE ONE PENNY."

Here, indeed, was a horrible mystery ; not lessened by the imaginations of the crowd that gesticulated, and turned up its eyes, and shook its head, and marvelled greatly. All sorts of conflicting rumours were afloat, some of them amazingly ingenious, but most of them hopelessly absurd. Every now and then one or two from the crowd would race off to the High-street, and join the larger assemblage that was gathered in front of the *Eagle* office. An advertisement, written on blank sheets, appeared in the window, and catching the eye and exciting the curiosity of the mob, occasionally drew an unwary purchaser to the little counter within. The advertisement ran thus:—

"ABDUCTION OF THE O'BANAGHER.

DOUBTS AND FEARS.

IMPORTANT CIRCUMSTANTIAL EVIDENCE.

DEPARTURE OF THE ROYAL IRISH CONSTABULARY.

DEPARTURE OF THE 9TH FOOT.

BRIEF MEMOIR OF THE O'BANAGHER.

ONE PENNY !!"

They order things better in Fleet-street ; but for one who united in his own person the offices of literary editor and commercial manager, the attempt was by no means a

bad one. It had a marked effect on the crowd, although not so great an effect as it would have had were purchasers not surrounded on their emergence from the office, and besought by the illiterate to read out the intelligence, a request with which the purchaser usually complied—reciting in the hearing of all. By this means, all the important paragraphs became the property of non-purchasers as well as of those who had the moral courage to invest their hard-earned pennies—a result which the editor deplored, but was unable to prevent. And indeed the *Eagle* was well worth a penny that morning. It contained a lengthened and glowing description of The O'Banagher's conduct at the wedding party ; his gay condescension at the ball ; his characteristic generosity to the bride. Then followed a minute description of the preparations made for his repose, a description of the bed, with an exact enumeration of the bed-clothes ; a notification of the hour at which his amiable hostess took leave of him, and a verbatim report of their last interview. Then all became mystery and surmise. His hunting cap and silver-mounted riding-whip had been discovered in the morning. And there had also been discovered somewhat in a bottle of foreign shape, a broken pipe, the stump of a cigar, and a scrap of a French newspaper.

"It is clear from this evidence," said the *Eagle*, "that some party or parties unknown entered the kitchen after the respected gentleman had retired to seek upon the extemporised couch that repose which his recent exertions in the hunting field had rendered specially desirable. We are informed, on indubitable testimony, that at all times The O'Banagher is a particularly heavy sleeper. Fatigue and excitement would, upon this occasion, have rendered the arrests of sleep more potent than usual. While in this state of unconsciousness, the villain or villains made his or their attack ; and, for aught we know to the contrary," continued the writer, "the unfortunate and beloved gentleman may be immured in the romantic but inaccessible solitudes of a smugglers' cave ; or upon some lonely heath his mangled corpse may be stretched, the manly heart at rest for ever—the innocent blood calling upon high Heaven for vengeance."

Thus ably and eloquently did the editor cater for his constituents. A notice in the advertising columns promised a second edi-

tion in case any event of importance transpired before three o'clock in the afternoon.

While the crowd was standing, with that morbid curiosity which impels people to cluster about a horror long after they have gleaned the least important detail connected with it, and gazing at the big posters, two horsemen drew up at the door of the office. The crowd at once recognized the well-known features of Larry, The O'Banagher's body-servant. The other servant was Mike, The O'Banagher's groom. If anything short of the appearance of The O'Banagher's mangled corpse could have increased the popular excitement, it was such an arrival as this. The crowd pressed eagerly round the obliging Larry, and asked a hundred questions all in a breath. But Larry, with a stern and melancholy countenance, requested them to "be aisy." He then jumped from his horse, threw the reins to the groom, and rushing unceremoniously into the editor's private room, requested that gentleman to give him all the latest particulars that had reached him. The editor, who knew nothing except what had already appeared, indulged in an eloquent recital of his various articles on the question; and Larry, in exchange for his politeness, informed him that he was about to look for his master himself—as he couldn't bear the "suspense" any longer, and he didn't "b'lieve the sojers and peelers was worth a snuff." Larry emerged, mounted his horse, and rode off with a very grave expression on his proverbially merry face. The crowd gazed after the departing horses, and then turned to wait patiently for the next excitement.

Larry didn't let the grass grow under his horse's feet; and Mike kept up with Larry.

When they arrived at Mrs. Connor's shebeen, they found two of the constables of the detachment in the kitchen, smoking. Their comrades had taken the road to the right of the house, intending to explore the neighbourhood thoroughly. The military had not arrived, and were supposed to have taken the wrong road. Larry, having explained who he was, and the nature of his mission, obtained stabling for the two horses; and returning to the kitchen, round which he gazed tearfully, proceeded to ask a few questions. He elicited among other facts that The O'Banagher's riding-whip had been discovered, not in the kitchen, as the *Eagle*

had falsely asserted, but on the road to the left of the house; from which he argued, naturally enough, that the master had taken that road in disappearing. Larry therefore determined to take the road to the left, and then—trust to providence.

Before leaving the kitchen, he drew from his breast-pocket two small pistols, which he carefully loaded; and giving one of them to Mike, he nodded to the surprised and sleepy policemen and departed. They had not proceeded a great distance down the Isnagarran-road, when they came to the identical boreen down which we beheld The O'Banagher vanishing. Had it been an ordinary boreen, it would not have attracted Larry's attention; but it was *not* an ordinary boreen. Larry had never seen such a dismal, dark, lonely boreen in all his life before. Larry stopped to have a good look at it. A high, dank ditch, covered with nettles and dock leaves, ran down each side. Rough brushwood was growing over the confined roadway. Behind the ditch on either side grew a row of great elm trees, which, mingling their branches overhead, excluded the direct rays of the sun. There was that deserted, forlorn air about the place that sometimes grows round a scene where ghosts are supposed to walk, or where a horrible thing has happened. It looked so dark and forbidding, and altogether undesirable, that were it not for the deep ruts, now full of water from last night's rain, you might have thought it one of those undiscovered waste places—

"—where no one comes,
Or hath come since the making of the world."

Larry stood looking down the damp and leafy avenue. He was irresolute and puzzled, but evidently reasoning with himself. At last he said to his companion—

"They wouldn't go far down the main road—would they, Mike?"

"Arrah, how the divil can I tell?" said Mike, who was one of those who never argued on probabilities—and never acted on them either.

"An' they'd go to a lonely place av they meant mischief—wouldn't they?" said Larry, more to himself than to Mike.

"Troth, it's meself doesn't know what the blackguards 'ud do."

"They might have taken this boreen, be jabers."

"Well, I dar say they might, now," said the groom, who was determined not to com-

mit himself, and who evidently didn't at all like the appearance of the shady thoroughfare, concerning an entry into which Larry's mind was now being exercised.

"It's as dark as the devil! Faith, we'll take it. Look t' yer pistol, and come along."

So saying, Larry walked boldly into the lane, followed by his aide-de-camp.

The boreen ran between two fields, and had fallen into disuse owing to the opening of a more commodious lane a little higher up the road. Larry and Mike were soon up to the eyes in mud, but struggled on manfully, stumbling now over a stone hidden in the rank creepers, and now slipping into a hole some feet in depth. They peered into every bush that they passed, and now and then scrambled to the top of the ditch to obtain a glimpse of the surrounding scenery. But they saw nothing. Even the birds and four-footed creatures seemed to have deserted the dismal spot. The monotonous croak of a frog from the side of a slimy pool, the frightened chirp-chirp of a nervous sparrow, were all the signs of life that saluted the ears of the wanderers. It's a long boreen that hath no turning. That which Larry was now stumbling through had several. They had proceeded with infinite caution about half a mile when they came to the first of them; and the moment they achieved the angle, and entered upon a new vista, they saw before them, and coming in their direction, a little man dressed in seedy black. The little man was stepping gingerly to avoid the green puddles; but the moment his eye detected Larry approaching, pistol in hand, he suddenly turned tail and fled, hoping probably that he was unobserved. If he cherished any such hope he speedily found it delusive, for Larry, shouting out at the top of his voice, "Holy Vargin! it's Johnny Corrigan! Howld! Stop! Howld hard, ye devil—whoop!" dashed off wildly in pursuit—the groom keeping well up with his rapid strides.

The little man only increased his pace as the exultant shriek of Larry rang in his ears. The little man ran excellently, and terror seemed to give him wings; but Larry, who was fresher and stronger, gained upon him gradually but perceptibly. It was an exciting chase. A stumble of Larry's, and the consequent halt of Mike to pick him up, gave the fugitive a momentary advantage. It was soon lost, however, and the distance

between pursuer and pursued was diminished to a few yards. Mike stopped, stooped, lifted a stone, ran on again, stopped once more, and then threw the missile with considerable force. It was well aimed. It hit the little man in the back of the neck. The stricken hero stopped for an instant, made a spasmodic effort to continue the race, but failed in the intention, and staggering forward, would have fallen to the ground, but that Larry, at that moment coming up to him, grasped him suddenly by one of the coat-tails. Larry, however, in catching the coat-tail, also caught some metallic substance therein concealed, which, penetrating the cloth and inserting itself into Larry's palm, caused him a sudden pang of pain. Releasing his hold on the broadcloth with one hand, he administered to the little man a severe blow on the back with the other, which sent him sprawling on face and hands in the soft, adhesive mud. Prompted by a curiosity which mastered for the moment all other feelings, Larry thrust his hand into the back pocket of the overtaken and overthrown fugitive, in order to discover the instrument of torture hidden in its dark recesses, and pulled out one of The O'Banagher's spurs! He gave a yell of surprise and exultation, which the groom failed instantly to understand; and then, catching the fallen wretch by the waistband of the breeches, he set him on his feet effectually, but roughly. The man looked a most miserable object, with the brown mud and green moisture clinging to all parts of his body. At the same time he assumed an air of offended dignity, which was in itself sufficiently amusing.

GAME.

FRANK, Tom, and myself were clerks in a large house of business in one of the principal towns in Suffolk.

We lodged together. We were sitting chatting over the fire one Christmas Eve, enjoying ourselves with some whiskey hot, and as nice a bit of bird's-eye as was procurable, when Frank suggested that, as we should have a holiday on Boxing-day, we couldn't do better than have a day's shooting.

"Capital idea!" remarked Tom, "nothing would please me better."

I did a wild pirouette round the room, finishing up with a break-down à la Mackeney, with delight. Just the very thing!

Hadn't I, as a boy, succeeded, by an immense amount of coaxing, in wheedling my brother to lend me his gun; and hadn't I, by exercising as much cunning as an Indian on the trail of an enemy, succeeded in getting within a few yards of a chaffinch, and, by using a stump of a tree as a rest, fired and thoroughly dissected the object of my ambition? I can well remember the thrill of delight that pervaded my youthful frame as I saw the feathers fly and the bird fall. What a hero I thought myself!

Well, it was decided that we should have a day's shooting, but then came the question of arms of warfare. Frank could borrow one gun; but as Tom and I were not so fortunate as to have a friend possessed of the needful, we began to look blue.

"Well," said Frank, "if we cannot procure two more, we must take it in turns to fire."

This didn't come up to my idea of a day's sport; so, after a great deal of ruminating, we waited in a body on an iron-monger, whom we persuaded into allowing us to hire two guns for the sum of ten shillings.

Boxing-day arrived. We were up betimes, and laid in a stock of ammunition—nearly, I afterwards found, enough for a week—and off we started, using the utmost care in carrying our guns as sportsmen, and feeling as big as—well—clerks.

Modesty prevents my saying how we looked, but at any rate we got horribly chaffed en route through the town. One young urchin was very pressing to know whether we had insured our lives; another as to our having taken the precaution to make our wills; and other playful remarks were aimed at us. We were good-tempered—not a single touch of bile in our whole bodies. Wasn't it Christmas time, and were we not going to have a glorious day, and had we not all an invitation to a party at the principal confectioner's in the evening—which confectioner, I may here add, possessed some jolly daughters, one—Amy—being the jolliest, sweetest, and prettiest of the lot—in my eyes.

We were soon out of the town and into the fields; and now for sport.

Frank gave us strict injunctions to keep our eyes open. We did.

Tom would stick close to me with the

muzzle of his gun generally in a line with my head. No luck through first field. We did see a flock of starlings, but they wouldn't be circumvented. At last I got a shot at a lark, and missed it. He—it must have been a he—commenced warbling away with the greatest nonchalance, and, I thought, treating me with contempt; taking no notice of my shot, but gently gliding into the next field. Tom thought I had fired too low. I thought I had forgotten to put any shot in my gun, but I didn't say so. Before I had again loaded, I espied another bird coming over.

"Now!" I exclaimed, "here's a chance—look out."

Tom, I must mention, was uncommonly near-sighted, and carried an eye-glass, which eye-glass was always a source of trouble to him, for after screwing his features into the most frightful contortions, that glass would not stick in his eye. I have known him to spend no end of time in attempting to fix it without avail. He now wears spectacles.

"Where?" said Tom, excitedly.

"There; coming right over your head—make haste."

Up went the glass, and a glimpse was caught of the bird, now out of range; the gun raised, steady aim taken at the spot where he imagined the bird to be, report; up went the eye-glass with a view to seeing the effect of the shot. The bird didn't fall; but Tom would persist in affirming that it was hit; and there he stood watching until it was out of sight.

"Better luck next time," he said, when he found the bird was really gone; but the better luck never came.

Frank all this time had been sauntering some thirty yards in the rear, and looked very happy, puffing away at his briar-root. I now chanced to look towards him, and at that moment he commenced the most singular capers: down went his pipe, his arm waved to us frantically, which we construed into "don't make a noise," he began stealthily walking on the tips of his toes to the hedge: gun raised—aim taken—gun down again—up again—more tiptoe business. This was repeated over and over again, till at last he fired, with a ya-hoop—rushed up the bank, and began searching diligently in the hedge.

We thought he had bagged a prize, so went to gloat over the spoil. We helped in

the search, till at last we suggested that he had missed his bird. This ruffled Frank's plumage, and he went vigorously again to work, and with a shout of victory held up to our admiring eyes, a—well, tell it not in Gath—tomtit. He was as proud as if it had been a pheasant. This put new life into us, and we hoped to be in a position to carry home a good bag—I think that is the correct term.

The fates were not propitious. Whether the birds were impressed with the unerring decision of our aim, or whether the guns would not carry true, our sport was bad, in fact, outrageously bad—birds couldn't be got at. Even if we did manage to get within shooting distance, we either fired too high or too low, or at this or the other side. We had left fields behind us, having walked miles, and were now on ploughed land. We were just getting off one piece into a lane, when we were accosted by a man having the appearance of a farmer, who, in anything but dulcet tones, inquired if we knew what we were doing.

"Certainly," replied we—"shooting."

The next question was, who had given us permission. Frank, always of a merry turn of mind, and thinking the questioner was rather impertinent in thus catechising us, informed him, "Snooks." This didn't satisfy him. Had we a licence? We informed him that as neither of us contemplated marriage at that moment, we did not possess a licence. This rather upset him: he wanted our names and addresses, which we declined to give, and thought it quite time we turned the tables; so we inquired after his health, where he resided, and asked if he had not some good home-brewed at home, and would he not invite us to taste it?

He didn't take kindly to our badinage; informed us we were three young asses; he was the owner of the land; we had been trespassing, shooting without a licence, rendering ourselves liable to a prosecution. He was inclined to think we had been after game, and insisted upon our showing him what we had in our bag. Poor Frank, he carried the spoil, and I shall never forget his dejected aspect when he held up to the indignant farmer the little tomtit. Although I was shaking in my shoes at the position in which we were placed, I could not help bursting out in a hearty laugh, and even the old farmer could not resist a smile. We apologized, gave him our names, but failed to

appease him. He turned on his heel, and walked away with a parting salute that we should hear further of the matter.

We went home, sadder but wiser men; we had undoubtedly got into hot water. Here was a pretty ending—one tomtit, and a summons for trespass in prospective. It was no use brooding over it, so when evening came we dressed and went to the party; not, however, in our usual spirits. We didn't feel lively; there was that horrible meeting with the farmer, and the anticipated parade before the magistrates always cropping up. We were generally the life and soul of the company, could sing a good song, comic or sentimental, play the piano, &c., so were in request. This night we were distrait, and I suppose our looks betrayed us, for there were many inquiries after our health. We tried to be lively, but miserably failed.

The weight of woe must have been very vividly portrayed on my countenance; for Amy, almost with tears in her eyes, implored me to tell her what was the matter. Who could resist such pleading? So I unbosomed myself, giving her a full description of the injured party.

She was most particular as to whether I had described him correctly. Had he sandy whiskers? was he fat? and was I sure he had a scar on his cheek?

"Then it must be Uncle Johnson; and he is coming here later in the evening, with my aunt and cousins."

This was piling up the agony with a vengeance.

I wanted to be off ~~instanter~~; this she would not hear of. I had better stay and face it like a man. He was not at all of a vindictive disposition, and she thought things would turn out, perhaps, more favourably than I anticipated. I stayed, looking with dread every time the door opened, expecting to see his angry visage confronting me.

My two confrères, in the meantime, were recovering their spirits. Should I go and tell them what was in store? No. I would alone suffer! Just when such magnanimous thoughts were uppermost, who should be announced but the very identical party. I made myself into as small a compass as possible, and shrank behind my fair enslaver.

The first persons his eyes alighted on were Frank and Tom. Their eyes at that moment alighted upon him—they looked

pitiful, and inclined to faint. I was the next object of his gaze. I don't know how I looked. I felt small—very small. Amy at once came to the rescue. She went and gave the old man a hearty kiss—how I envied him! she was his favourite niece—and then, with blushes, introduced me. I bowed with all the grace I could muster, and held out my hand, and, I suppose, taking compassion on my hangdog look, and the fact of Amy being interested in me, he took it, smiling a most peculiar smile. The same ceremony was gone through with my two friends in adversity, after which Amy took him on one side, and, by dint of coaxing, succeeded in getting him into a forgiving frame of mind.

Our fair intercessor advised us to strike while the iron was hot, which we did—frankly apologizing for our rudeness, and hoping he would accept our contrition, and forget the unhappy episode. He was a brick!—the most expressive word I can find—forgave us there and then, but would persist in giving the company a resumé of the affair. We bore the roars of laughter with fortitude.

"The young dogs!" he finished with. "I could have looked over their shooting and trespassing; but to add insult to injury, by wanting me to invite them to taste my home-brewed, was too much. But now I promise them they shall, for I've got a bit of a party coming off; and if they will only come and sing my favourite old song, 'The Farmer's Boy,' next Wednesday"—(aside to me, "Amy will be there, you young ass—dog, I mean")—"they shall have it to their heart's content."

Need we say we went? How many times the chorus to "The Farmer's Boy" was sung I don't know; but we all thoroughly enjoyed ourselves, coinciding in our views that it was the jolliest party, and he was the jolliest old fellow, we ever came across.

Frank had the tomtit stuffed, and it now decorates his study.

THE SICILIAN VESPERS.

THE terrible massacre known by the above title took place at Easter, in the year 1282. It was but a verification of the old proverb of the trodden worm turning to bite its oppressor's foot. At this period the Sicilians were ruled over by a French prince of the House of Anjou, with a tyranny of

the most cruel and galling nature. Obnoxious to the Sicilians from his nation, the people had as well to bear the presence of a licentious and brutal alien soldiery, to whom nothing was sacred; and the history of the times teems with accounts of the coarse insults to which husbands and fathers of all classes had to submit, as offered to those who were nearest and dearest of their families. Under such a long course of oppression, it was but little wonder that the hot fire of Italian wrath should be smouldering, and waiting but for some slight fanning to leap into a devastating flame that should destroy all before it. The occasion arrived. Easter Monday being a grand fête day, a procession of the people of Palermo was formed to attend vespers at a neighbouring church; when the French rulers, who gazed with suspicion upon all gatherings of the people, made this a pretext for searching for arms. To a brutal, licentious soldiery, this supplied an opportunity for offering gross insults to the females, one of whom was a young married lady of great beauty and position. Her screams aroused the multitude; the spark was laid to the train; and, led by the lady's father and husband, the people rose in tumult. Arms were seized, and an indiscriminate slaughter of all the French in the city was the result.

This was but the alarm note for a general rising; and in town after town, upon that same day, massacres took place, the news flying swiftly, till not a place remained in the hands of the French but Messina. So hot was the people's rage, and so long a reign of cruelty had they to avenge, that mercy was forgotten, neither sex nor age was spared—French nationality being the password for death. Fortresses were attacked and carried, sharp and decisive engagements took place, and garrison after garrison was slaughtered; Messina only remaining at last to be taken to free the island from the foreign yoke. But here a pause ensued; many of the more substantial inhabitants fearing the power of the insurgents as opposed to that of the trained soldiery. But again a spark illumined the fire. A citizen was seized by the French for appearing in public bearing arms. He resisted, aided by friends; but being overcome, they were borne off to prison; when, not content with the conquest, the viceroy sent to arrest the prisoners' wives. This injustice roused the people, who flew to

arms, attacked the French, and slaughtered above three thousand, driving the others into their fortresses, which they took after an obstinate defence, and put the defenders to the sword.

The insurrection, commencing as it did on the night of the Palermo procession, has since been known by the name of the Sicilian Vespers. The number of French put to the sword has been variously estimated at from twenty to thirty thousand; but, whatever the number, the slaughter was fierce and indiscriminate; and, in spite of after-efforts to recover the territory, Sicily was from that time lost to the reigning King of Naples, Charles of Anjou.

TABLE TALK.

IT is a well-known custom with possessors of valuable plate—that of sending it to the bankers for safety. The Bank of England has to take its share, with the consequence that chests have been sent in from time to time. Unclaimed dividends are common enough, but what does the reader say to unclaimed plate? On visiting the vaults and moving some of the old chests, one was found so decayed that it fell to pieces, disclosing a quantity of plate of the middle of the seventeenth century. Moreover, there was a bundle of yellow, old letters—love letters—in the chest, telling a pleasant tale of youth, beauty, and romance, two hundred years old. To whom did the plate belong? It had lain there time out of mind. The whole affair savours more of fiction than matter-of-fact, but it is apparently true. The letters gave the required clue. The books of the Bank showed the same name, and a descendant having been found, the plate and the old missives have been handed to him. A pleasant kind of treasure trove, without the accompanying forfeit.

A WRITER in the "Atlantic Monthly" has a curious paper on the origin of the dollar symbol (\$). His theory is that the two parallel upright marks may be traced back to the pillars of Hercules, and the S-like figure to a scroll entwined around them. According to tradition, when the Tyrian Colony landed on the Atlantic coast of Spain, and founded the ancient city of Gades, now Cadiz, Melcarthus, the leader of the expedition, set up two stone pillars as a

memorial, over which was built a temple of Hercules. As the temple increased in wealth the stone pillars were replaced by others made of an alloy of gold and silver, and these two pillars became in time the emblem of the city, as a horse's head became that of Carthage. Centuries later, when Charles V. became Emperor of Germany, he adopted a new coat of arms, in which the pillars of Gades or Cadiz occupied a prominent position in the device. Hence, when a new coin, the collonnato, was struck at the Imperial mint, it bore the new device, two pillars, with a scroll entwined around them. This coin became a standard of value in the Mediterranean, and the pillars and scroll became its accepted symbol in writing. The two horizontal bars which cross the symbol of the English pound sterling (£) are also thought to have a similar origin.

THERE HAS BEEN much talk about the railways being taken up by Government and made a national matter, after the fashion of the Post-office and the telegraphs. It does not seem likely that this will come off, though, at present. Pending such an arrangement, some one suggests that the companies should take a step in the direction by a general amalgamation, under the comprehensive title of the Accidental Death Insurance Company.

QUAINT REMARKS are sometimes made in our police-courts: for instance, the other day a man was brought up before one of the sitting magistrates, charged with riotous behaviour and with using offensive language on the occasion of Mr. Hawkins leaving the court after a sitting for the Tichborne trial. The offender, who stuttered terribly, getting his words out accompanied by a redundancy of strange syllables, and all to the mutilation of the Queen's English, owned to being present at the time in question, and declared that he never made use of bad language!

Communications to the Editor should be addressed to the Office, 19, Tavistock-street, Covent-garden, W. C. All Contributions are attentively considered, and unaccepted MSS. are returned on receipt of stamps for postage; but the Editor cannot hold himself responsible for any accidental loss. No unaccepted MSS. will be returned until a written application has been made for them.

Terms of Subscription for ONCE A WEEK, free by post:—Weekly Numbers for Six Months, 5s. 5d.; Monthly Parts, 5s. 8d.

ONCE A WEEK

NEW SERIES.

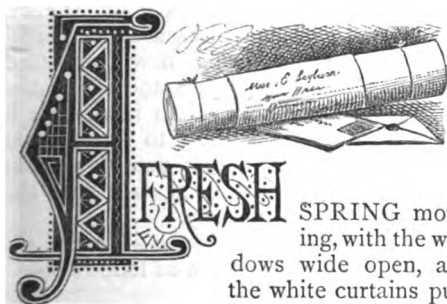
No. 318.

January 31, 1874.

Price 2d.

JACK'S SISTER; OR, WOMANLY PAST QUESTION.

CHAPTER IX.
AT THE BREAKFAST TABLE.



FRESH SPRING morning, with the windows wide open, and the white curtains puffing inwards, like white clouds blown there by the sweet cool breeze from the west; rain-drops glittering diamond-wise from every golden tassel on the laburnums, and every tender leaf and twig on the lime trees on the lawn; clear blue sky, flecked from east to west with little snow-white cloudlets, chasing each other over its limpid surface, and forming a wide circle round their smiling mother, the sun—said sun shining radiantly down on the old, red brick house, in its close-wove garment of ivy and jessamine; on the great lumps of pink and scarlet rhododendron in front of the window; on the long slope of green, soft, lustrous velvet beyond, strewn with white blossoms from the giant walnut tree, with its gnarled trunk scored by many a boy's knife, and its mighty pyramid of living green towering into the blue above, and making a vast emerald tent, where the sunbeams got broken into a thousand glittering bits, and came down in millions of golden flakes upon the grassy lawn, and moss-grown twisted bench beneath.

Not in the garden only did the sun

linger, however; but, marching in at the open casement, lit up the snowy damask of the breakfast table, ready set with its quaint, heavy service of old Chelsea; its massive silver urn, a presentation to some bygone Leyburn; its crusty loaf, and dainty pats of fresh country butter, set in sprigs of tender green; its mighty dish of cool, quivering brawn, and antiquated silver basket of crisp biscuits, fresh from the oven downstairs, and covered up in a napkin to keep hot; and then gliding on, touched into life the rich dark colouring of the few but rare old oil paintings, relieved against the pale green panelling of the walls; kissed the sparkling fire in its polished grate; and wandering back, flickered on the newspaper and post-bag by Mr. Leyburn's plate, and stayed to play among the little piles of letters, arranged beside their respective owners' seats at table.

A fair sight, my masters, an English gentleman's breakfast table on a bonny spring morning, and only wanting the presence of the human form divine to make it a fair picture.

In good time, here comes the daughter of the house to make all complete.

Enid.

It is so many years since you have seen her, that I doubt if you will recognise this young lady, who has just entered the room with a light, firm step, as though she were going straight to some particular object, the walk of a woman who has not found life so tiresome she can afford to dawdle through it; and a bright, clear face, in perfect unison with the brightness and clearness of the day. But I have chosen this especial hour to present her to you, because I hold that it is the best time of all others for judging a woman truly—the time wherein she appears most unconstrained, most inartificial, most in accordance with her real self.

My brothers, if you are seeking for a

wife, make **your** choice, not in gaslit ball-room or moonlit conservatory, but before breakfast of a morning. There is no moment of the day in which a pretty woman looks prettier, a good woman better, a neat woman neater, or a foul woman fouler.

Listen, then, while I sketch Enid Leyburn in the clear light of this early spring morning. Not a beauty, certainly, though there be men to whom, in days to come, she will yet appear "beautiful exceedingly." Not even pretty, according to the pink and white acceptation of the word. A tall, straight-limbed, fully proportioned young woman, with hands and feet rather large than small, but slender and well-shaped withal; with dark, soft, chestnut hair, brushed smoothly back from a broad, fair forehead, and fastened with an old-fashioned jet comb, in one thick coil behind her small and shapely head; with a clear, colourless skin, which yet has no faintest indication of ill-health; nose neither Grecian, Roman, nor aquiline, and rather characteristic than classical; square chin, and the large, sweetly grave eyes, and firm yet delicate mouth of her childhood, all combined in one pervading expression of restfulness and truth. For her dress (of course the women want to know that!), a gown of coarse brown holland, fresh as a daisy and plain as a Quaker's, fitting like a glove to her full, womanly figure; and fastened round the throat with a tiny ruffle of snowy cambric, and a quaint silver brooch. In one hand, a wicker basket, containing a pair of scissors and gardening gloves; in the other, a bunch of keys.

La voilà !

Allow me to add that, if you have a craving for houris, or gold-tressed girls of the period, with amorous eyes, you had better go elsewhere; but if you want a pure, sensible, and healthy-minded young Englishwoman, you might travel a great many miles, and not find a better specimen than Enid Leyburn.

Like a true woman, she went straight at her letters, and inspected the handwritings with a pleased, inquisitive smile, which brought the roses into her cheek. Like a woman of habit, she let them lie unopened; and, taking the keys, unlocked a curious ebony tea-chest, all inlaid and encrusted with silver filigree work; and having extracted the proper "spoonful a-piece, and

one for the pot," made the tea, set it to draw; and taking her basket into the garden, proceeded to cut a quantity of sprays of sweet-scented lilac, rosy azaleas, and fairy-white cyclamen, which, framed in feathery-green fronds of maiden-hair and harts'-tongue, she arranged, with a certain dainty skill of her own, in a shallow bowl of Japanese china, and set in the middle of the breakfast table. Then she went out again, and diving into a bed of damp, crinkly leaves, emerged with a little knot of pale, fresh-blown primroses, which she bound together and laid beside her father's plate: a little floral ceremony so punctiliously observed, that I think Mr. Leyburn would have thought Enid very nigh at death's door had he happened to miss his customary bouquet some fine morning. This done, she cut the toast, and sent it down to be made; and, her labours being now completed, caught up the patient letters, and established herself on the window-sill to read them in the sunshine. I am going to give you the contents in extenso, that you may make an intimate acquaintance at once with this young lady and her family.

The first was from Merle—I mean she opened it first; and it ran as follows:—

"Magdalen College, April, 186—.

"DEAREST ENID—I thought your last letter would never come; and when it did, it was not as long—as your hair, par exemple. However, I know of old that I must not attempt to compete with either the district poor or Aunt Jane, in the disposal of your time; and I thank you very much for the newspaper and photo. It was very thoughtful of you to send the former, for I had not seen its review on my last, before; and was glad to do so ere hearing it commented on by any of the other fellows. You read it, of course? I should say it was written by some man who had a spite against me—or an unsuccessful author. Poor devil! one could but be amused by the travesty of what he calls my 'involved eloquence.' By the way, I send you a MS. to look over and correct (if the English should want correcting)—I have no time to do it; and I know my dear cousin is a good grammarian, besides being the most obliging little woman in the world! Don't bother about it; but I should like it back by to-morrow evening at latest. ("Then it must be done to-day," said Enid to the letter,

"and Aunt Jane wants me all this morning. Oh! well," with a glance at the thick roll of manuscript on the table, "I can give up my ride in the afternoon.")

"The photo was very nice, and gives one a capital idea of the picture; but why mount it on tinted card; and why—why not have coloured it as I asked? It might have been a trouble, but such an improvement! ("Trouble!" said Enid to the letter. "Why, my colouring would just have spoilt it for a reminder of Millais' glorious picture, and I went all over the town to get that tinted mount to throw up the photograph well. Poor fellow! now he is disappointed. Well, it was very stupid of me not to ask him first how he would like it." N.B. This young lady had a particular weakness for blaming herself in preference to other people whenever it was possible so to do.) "No news here, except that I am awfully seedy, and would fain be on my back among the daisies, in the dear Home meadows, with Enid reading Wallenstein aloud from her favourite seat under the old plane tree, instead of poring myself blind over Latin and Greek verses till I feel tempted to cry—

'Ache! Ache! Ache!

O'er thy crabbed old verses, Greek,
Till I would that my tongue might utter
The curses easy to speak.

Oh! well for the biceps of Jack,
As he rows down the Isis at noon;

Oh! ill for the curate to be,
As he reads by the light of the moon.'

Or rather, 'by the light of the lamp.' But here is midnight! and as my head is aching too much to read any more, I will go curl myself in the arms of Morpheus instead. By the way, how idiotic of the ancients to represent Morpheus as a m— But I am forgetting! Pardon your coz, and God bless and keep you good and happy, as you always are.

"Yours most affectionately,

"MERLE KINNARDSON.

"P.S. Loves to family, of course. If you could tint another copy of the photo, and send it unmounted; but that would be too much to ask—so I don't! Be sure and send the MS. corrected to-morrow. Again, adieu!"

"Yes, I will be sure," said Enid to the letter. "But I wish you would not over-work yourself so, Merle dear. I fancy from your letter that you are making your-

self really ill with study, and also that poor dear Jack isn't working at all. By the way, I haven't read his letter yet."

She opened it. It did not take long to read.

"DEAR ENID—Thanks for yours of the 12th. Tell the governor not to think of selling Lady Belle. If not up to my weight, she only wants a little breaking in to suit you admirably. Time you had something better than the old pony, and I can hire a hack easily when I want a mount. Training hard for 6th. If we don't beat Cam this year, shall cut my throat. Who d' you think is stroke of the Light Blues? Clif Gore! Awfully jolly to see him again; but don't mean to let the beggar beat us, for all that. No time for more. Going down the river to train. Love to governor and Aunt Jane. Cheque received.

"Your affectionate brother,

"JACK.

"P.S. Forgot to answer your query about Lovejoy of Exeter. Didn't know much of him. Rather soft sort, but good form and all that. Heard wife was a lady. Call, by all means."

So ended Jack's epistle. Short as it was, it had brought a pleased smile into his sister's eyes.

"How kind of him to give me Lady Belle," she thought. "Dear old Jack! I wish he would study. Papa will be so vexed if he gets plucked and—oh! auntie, good morning."

For the room door had opened to admit Miss Leyburn, very grey about the head, very wrinkled about the face and throat; yet, on the whole, wearing fifty-six better than she had worn forty-four—a common occurrence with old maids when they have at length and at last passed the age for disappointments, and their subsequent sourings.

"Good morning to you, Enid," said the lady, holding up one semi-shrivelled, semi-pulpy cheek for her niece's kiss. "Your hair is very much rumpled, my dear, and how can you sit in the window, spoiling your complexion? Shut it down now, if you please, the wind is too fresh for me."

Enid obeyed smilingly, apologized also smiling for the liberties taken by the wind with her abundant locks, and hastened to put the footstool near her aunt's feet, while

that lady inspected the addresses on her letters, took the cosy off the teapot, filled it up, and then, after giving a scrutinizing glance to the appearance of the table, said to her niece—

"Tell your papa, my dear, that I have made the tea, and got breakfast ready for him, if he is ready for it."

A piece of work which, it is worthy of mention, she really believed she had performed, and (such is the force of habit) even Enid would have been surprised had any one dreamt of propounding a contrary opinion in her hearing. That young lady now tripped lightly across the square oak-panelled hall, tapped at the study door, and returned in a couple of minutes with one hand tucked fondly under her father's arm, and her tender eyes turned up to the still handsome face of the stalwart banker.

"And what news is there this morning?" asked the latter, as, having saluted his sister, he seated himself before the brawn. "I saw you had letters from both the boys, Enid."

Mr. Leyburn, be it recorded, always rose at six; and had digested the whole of his business correspondence before breakfast.

"Yes, papa," said Enid, "and both sent love to you and Aunt Jane. Jack says he doesn't want Lady Belle sold, papa. Listen," and she read it aloud. "Isn't it very good of Jack, papa?"

"H'm—yes. If you think the mare is safe for you. I must speak to William about breaking her in. He had better take her out with a lady's saddle and habit every day. Does Jack say whether he got that money? He had no right to want it so soon—young scamp!"

"Yes—I think so. Yes, he says he has received it."

"And no thanks, of course?"

Enid looked at the letter reluctantly, and was obliged to confess that thanks were missing.

"But he wrote in a great hurry, papa," she added, eagerly, "for he was just going down to the river. They are training so hard for the boat-race, you know."

"Ah! to be sure. Well, if the rest of the eight have half our lad's skill and muscles, I think we may back Dark Blue to win; though the times seem to have changed since I was stroke in the Oxford boat, and we beat Cambridge by nearly six lengths. Let me see, that was in thirty—thirty—"

"It seems to me, though, that Jack might as well row here as go to college for nothing else," spoke Miss Leyburn, in measured accents, over her cup of tea. "Does not he study at all, Enid? Mrs. Northcote was boasting of her boy yesterday, and asking me how Jack stood for passing. It will be terribly mortifying if he should fail."

"He won't go back to Oxford after the long vacation," said Mr. Leyburn, shortly—"and he knows that; so if he likes to come home a failure, he may; but I don't think he will."

"I am sure he won't," put in Enid, warmly. "Our Jack couldn't be a failure. He mayn't come out as high as Merle; but he'll pass somehow—so don't you fret, auntie, dear. Talking of Merle, he is not at all well, papa—suffering from his head again, poor boy!"

"He is always complaining," said Aunt Jane, "and it is just nothing but bile. A good dose of blue pill—"

"Or a good dose of exercise," put in Mr. Leyburn; "that's what he wants. He coddles indoors too much. I wish the lad had a tithe of Jack's spirit."

"I think he puts all his spirit into his work just now," answered the peacemaker, gently. "Just think, papa, he is at his books half the night. I shouldn't be surprised if he gets a double first; and then he is writing so well—essays for the *Scorpion*, and poetry, and—"

"Poetry still!" cried Mr. Leyburn; "I thought he had outgrown that fever. Well, it's all very fine; but I'm glad he's going to be a parson, for to my mind a young fellow who writes milk and water rhymes is fit for nothing else."

"Wait till he is a bishop and we are all boasting of our noble relative," said Enid, nodding her head saucily at her father.

"Yes, my dear, we will," answered Aunt Jane, and nodded her head grimly.

Enid felt a little hurt; but, like a wise woman, said nought. "Le grand art de se taire" was one of this young lady's chief accomplishments; and finding her satire unchallenged, Miss Leyburn started a new subject with her second cup of tea.

"I have a letter from Lady Crawford, John," she said, laying the epistle and her spectacles beside her plate. "Jane Carmichael that was, you know—she married

Sir Benton Crawford of Illesley, not one of the Crawfurds of Gorton Hall, they are Shropshire people, quite another family; but the Warwickshire Crawfurds, people of very good standing, and capitally connected—though they do say Sir Benton's grandfather married his mother's lady's-maid, and—"

"Yes, my dear; and what is her news?" asked Mr. Leyburn, who, while keeping a kindly ear for his sister's genealogical discourses, was allowing one eye to wander to an interesting paragraph in the morning paper.

"She says—let me see—oh, 'Your step-mother is expecting another addition.' Not much interest that piece of news to us, I think—eh, John?"

"Except that we hope she will get over it well," said Mr. Leyburn, gravely.

"Oh, of course; but considering that she is married again?"

"My father was sixty-seven when he married again, Jane. I hardly suppose that he expected a young woman of four-and-twenty would remain single for ever."

"Well, my dear, she made him settle the Hall and more than half his property on her, actually robbing Jack and Enid of their rightful inheritance; therefore, I confess, I did expect her to remain single, if only to make restitution; and I cannot feel to her as a Christian should on the subject."

"Sorry for it, my dear. I know you women can't be just; but I thought Christianity one of your special prerogatives."

"Brother! And before this child, too!"

"This child is quite contented with her present wealth," said the infant alluded to, in her brightest tones. "Fancy wishing to change this dear old house for another, however grand! Why, it would break our hearts. It is hard for you, poor auntie, but—"

"Oh, I was not thinking of myself, love," said Aunt Jane, in softened spirit. "Indeed, I prefer Marshton Fallows; but I do grieve for you two."

"So long as they don't grieve for themselves, I am resigned," spoke Mr. Leyburn, sighing.

"This vain old gentleman wants to be told for the hundredth time that his children prefer being proud of their father to being proud of an estate," Enid answered, in a

sort of demure aside, which made the banker laugh. "Has Lady Crawford no other news, auntie?"

"Oh, yes, my love; and of interest to us. Ah, here it is:—'A grand-daughter of General Courtland has gone to live in your town; not one of the eldest son's children, but Henry's second girl. She has only married a curate; but I believe a niceish young man, and with some small property of his own. Besides, as you know, Henry Courtland is not too well off—only a major in the artillery; and with four daughters on his hands is, I dare say, not sorry to get one off anyhow. I hear the courtship was most amusing. The young couple were bent on getting married; but once consent was obtained, and the engagement ratified by both parents, they seemed to become actually afraid of one another; and, in place of over-demonstrativeness, shunned every opportunity of being together, and never spoke to or even looked at each other, if possible, before others—the young gentleman devoting himself to any other lady in preference, and the girl snubbing him if ever he did venture a word in her direction. How they will ever get through the honeymoon together her sisters can't imagine. The proposal he managed by letter, which obviated the necessity of any "tangible" marks of affection. Ah, well, my dear Jane, in this age of fastness and licence one ought to be glad of a little reserve; but this seems carrying the matter so far that one is tempted to think of the old proverb, "Still waters run deep." And they do say sometimes, that after—' However, that is all about it," said Miss Leyburn, quickly, and folding the letter as she spoke. "It came most opportunely, for Mrs. Northcote asked me yesterday if we should call on the new curate and his wife; and I said, certainly not, until we knew who were their connections, &c."

"I asked Jack about him," said Enid; "and he said we might call—that he was good form and all that."

"Good what, my dear?"

"A gentleman, I mean, auntie. I was only quoting Jack."

"And Jack is to be depended on in such matters," observed Mr. Leyburn. "So call, and tell me all about them. They must be a rum young couple."

"Admirably brought up, I should think," said Miss Leyburn, with a gravity especially

intended for Enid's benefit. "Such modesty and reserve is as rare as it is edifying. Are you going already, John?"

"Yes, my dear. Thanks, Enid," as she helped him into his great coat, and brought him his hat and stick. "By the way, my child, I can join your ride this afternoon. I have to go over to Babbicombe on business."

"Oh, papa, how pleasant!" cried Enid, gladly. "Then—but, oh! I forgot," her voice falling again. "What a pity! I have some work to do which will prevent my riding to-day."

"Can't you put it off, my dear? I would as soon let young Grey drive me over myself, as he proposed; but as you so seldom have any escort but William, I thought you would like the ride."

"And so I should, gladly, and thank you very much, papa. You are always thinking of me; but— No, I'm afraid I can't put this off. It is not for myself, and I'm very sorry."

"Never mind, child, the days are lengthening now, and we shall soon have our evening rides again. Good-bye."

And his kiss chased the regret from Enid's face at the thought of fifty-two pages of manuscript to correct, vice a pleasant ride with her father.

But Merle was still her first care.

CHAPTER X.

CHIEFLY BETWEEN MYSELF AND MY READER.

IT was again past five o'clock before young Kinnardson reached the trysting-place on the day after Daniel Evans's proposal to the bookseller's daughter; and as he pulled himself along in a light skiff, choosing the river way this time for a change, the young man's face showed that he was by no means in the sweetest of moods. In the first place, he was making no progress at all towards passing for his "little go," not having been working properly for the last few weeks. Indeed, his desultory fits of hard reading could hardly be dignified by the solid title of "work" at all; and were generally productive of nothing but a sick headache, which left him good for nothing during the next few days but to wander aimlessly about, take nips of curaçoa every half-hour, and write morbid poetry under their influence; which poems might with advantage have been labelled "spirituous," and laid upon a high shelf as warnings, after the manner of

Oliver Wendell Holmes when he ticketed his, "pie crust" on recovering from the attack of indigestion, consequent on partaking of that comestible.

Added to this subject for reflection, he had got into an extravagant, wine-drinking set in the college; and was deep in so many literary bubbles—bubbles only too addicted to bursting instead of rising on the wings of fame—that he had no time for heavier work; and was even now oppressed with the consciousness that he was more deeply in debt than a purse twice as well filled as his could afford to repay. Some men might have made light of the whole matter, and either put it out of their minds altogether, or turned it off as a jest; but, happily or unhappily, Merle was not gifted with so thoughtless or light-hearted a disposition; and every wrong step he took brought him so little pleasure in proportion to the after-pain that it was almost a pity he could not summon up sufficient strength of mind to walk in the right way once and for always.

Alas! that was just the quality he lacked most, and its absence was sufficient to embitter his whole draught of life.

Merle Kinnardson was just as weak as a baby!

Weak in mind, weak in body, weak in will; and as a natural consequence—for does not the poet tell us "strong passions mean weak wills"?—only strong in that which was leading him, lamenting and resisting it is true, but leading him none the less direct to his ruin. And there was only one human being in all the world who had sufficient influence over his soul to save him, even for a time, from sinking irredeemably—

His cousin Enid.

With her, walking at her side, hearing her talk, seeing how absolutely her whole life was ruled, not by feeling but principle—the principle of love and the principle of truth—swayed by her intense longing to see him greater and better than other men, awed by her perfect purity, and continually rebuked by her entire unselfishness, Merle could not but feel the lower elements of his nature dwindle and fade away, while every higher and nobler impulse gathered strength and vigour till he not only seemed, but felt, quite another man to the nervous, shifty-eyed undergraduate whom Middlemist described as always looking as though he were "keeping something dark." Jack's jest on the subject was not far out, after all—the "dark

thing" which he was hiding *was* himself, his worst self, the miserable weakness which had been—aye, and was to be—the curse of his entire life.

He found very little pleasure really in the society of a set of fast young fellows, mostly titled and all wealthy, who drank, smoked, and gambled among themselves, and took to Merle because he had pleasant, gentlemanly manners, could tell a good story, and write Anacreontic melodies for after-supper singing. What cared these gay young gentlemen commoners whether he could afford guinea-point whist, breakfasts on plovers' eggs, and iced champagne and prime sultanas ad libitum, when they condescended to finish up an evening in the "poet's grot," as they were pleased to christen Merle's quarters? Jack would have cared had he known; but the fact was he knew nothing about it, and probably saw less of his cousin than of any other among his college acquaintances.

Two years older than Merle, opposed to him in every shade of thought, feeling, and habits, and half through his own college career before the latter joined, he had never fraternised with his relative; and after introducing him to some of his friends, and playing Mentor for the first week or so, with a laborious conscientiousness which was an equal bore to both, he left the young Telemachus to go his own way; and finding that way did not happen to cross or follow his own in any single particular, troubled his head about him as little as might be; and rather looked down on his junior as a "milk and watery sort of chap," reading up all right, and attending chapel and lectures; but too fond of scribbling rhymes and frequenting ladies' drawing-rooms, and too lamentably indifferent to the charms of boating or athletes, to be good company for everyday life.

To speak the truth, the young men were cast in moulds too different to be able to assimilate, or even sympathize with one another. Merle had never quite overcome a sort of jealous timidity of his cousin, nor a half-resentful remembrance of Jack's roughness and occasional bullying in their childish days; and now considered him a great, overgrown, thick-headed fellow, whose brains had all run to muscle, and who was only fit for a bargee or a prize-fighter, if any ill circumstance should prevent his being a banker; and withal a fellow who,

by dint of his father's purse and his father's position, had all the world before him, and would be a rich and prosperous man, while he, Merle, with ten times the talents, and twice the capacity for enjoying wealth and ease, must drag out his life in some miserable curacy, because, as he bitterly told himself, his father had been fool enough to take a wife without her dower.

This reflection, however, was hardly just on the part of young Kinnardson, inasmuch as, had his father received the dowry which ought to have belonged to his wife, every penny of it would probably have been long since spent; whereas now it was carefully invested for Merle's benefit, and only the yearly interest expended in part payment of his education. Indeed, so far the two cousins had received exactly the same allowances to a penny—with this difference, that while Jack lived within his ordinary occasions, and wrote to his father for aid when he found himself, as occasionally happened, "outrunning the constable," Merle had walked so deeply into debt during his freshman's year that he now made no effort to extricate himself; but went on adding every term to the load of encumbrances already weighing on him, and saying nothing of his difficulties to any one, but simply staving off his creditors with IOU's and promises to pay, which, I doubt me, would have found very small acceptance if it had not got about among the tradesmen, in some mysterious manner, and by whose agency I know not, that young Mr. Kinnardson was a wealthy ward of his uncle, and the heir to immense property which he could not enter on till he left college.

For this reason therefore Master Merle was allowed to go on in his insolvency, getting further into debt every day, and paying about double as much as most men for all he bought (those who know the usual charges of Oxford tradesmen can appreciate the probable amount of his bills), with the pleasurable result of gathering a very fair library, a small but choice collection of rare prints, coins, and articles of "vertu" (Merle's tastes were refined, and would have graced a millionaire); and also, as he never drew on his uncle for more than his allowance, of being spared any of those paternal lectures which fell to Jack's share whenever the exigencies of the boat-club, a loan to an impecunious friend, or

an unusually open season for hunting—hacks hired from Drew's livery stables at ruinous prices—had made that young gentleman's account look more foolish than his assets justified.

Now, to be fair, I must mention here that at the beginning of young Leyburn's university career, he also had launched out rather extensively; going in for steeplechasing, tandem-driving, and other expensive amusements, which soon told upon his expenditure; and being avowed in all honesty, earned him a talking to during the long vacation which made him draw in his horns once and for all. Mr. Leyburn was not unkind, but he was very firm on the subject; and in a long ride over Erdley Common one summer's afternoon, he pointed out to Jack the folly and injustice of living beyond his means, and so improving himself in after-life, and laying up a stock of extravagant habits which would quite unfit him for following his father's path in life.

"Your home is the bank, Jack," Mr. Leyburn said, as they trotted gently up a long hill all aglow of golden gorse. "You live by it, and it has got to live by you. You know exactly what our income is, and that your grandfather's marriage has made it impossible to increase it from any external source. I allow you two hundred a year, which is fifty more than my father allowed me, and quite as much as I can honestly spare you from other expenses. So now, Jack, if you get into debt, and into fast, extravagant ways, I must, of course, pay your bills—as I would rather close the bank than see a son of mine dishonoured; but in that case you will beggar yourself in the future, bitterly grieve me, and take from your sister's share instead of adding to it. There, I've spoken plainly enough. I'm an old man now, and I should like to take a pride and a comfort in my only son. But put me out of the question. It is your own affair, and you must choose for yourself. I shall say no more."

"I've chosen," said Jack. "Thank you, father;" and not another word was spoken on the subject. Jack's bills were paid, and he went back to Oxford; but once there, the young fellow set himself to make a material difference in his way of living. Steeplechasing and tandem-racing were given up, with many other minor expenses which "wouldn't fit," as Jack expressed it;

and for the next two terms he was never once absent from Hall dinner, never present at a wine party as either host or guest, and never seen on any legs but his own. Of course, his friends chaffed him unmercifully, and his life during that period was made anything but blissful. Is there any process more disagreeable than reformation? But he held his ground as doggedly as a lump of iron; and at the end of the year, not only settled all his own accounts, but was able to hand his father a residue of twenty pounds over and above. Mr. Leyburn refused to take it, of course; but perhaps he had never grasped his son's hand more warmly; and now, though Jack (not being a saint) did, as we have seen, occasionally overstep the bounds, he promptly communicated the fact, took a lecture on the subject with perfect good humour, generally contrived to make up by extra economy next term, and both gave and enjoyed the most entire confidence and affection with his father.

Aye, it had been well for Merle had he also made a friend of his uncle, and confided in his kindness, instead of never telling him anything which it was possible to keep to himself. It must be allowed, however, that he had one temptation from which Jack was exempt, and which runs away with more of a young man's time and money than anything else—*i.e.*, the fair sex. Rosy lips had no sweetness for young Leyburn. The softest of siren voices was not half as musical to him as the dips of the oars in his own college boat, as it spun over the course between Oxford and Iffley. To be lord of the loveliest girl that ever shone in a London season was nothing compared to the glory of being stroke in the University eight; and to come in first in a three-mile walking match, beat all the conquests of all the "Amy's shallow-hearted" that ever made men's hearts to beat, and their pulses to thrill.

The fact was, Jack didn't care about women. He had not the smallest suspicion of tenderness for any one member of the sex—outside the door of his own home. Anything *belonging* to him was different; being, as a matter of course, something better, grander, and more precious than anybody else's belongings—that was one of Jack's little idiosyncrasies; and therefore, besides loving Enid with a calm, brotherly, patronizing affection, he looked on her as

something quite different from the general run of women, altogether superior and holier, and only coming second to the memory of the mother they had lost so early.

Even to Enid, however, Jack would never have dreamt of entering into his private feelings as he did with his father; and though he would have even given up a day with the hounds rather than let her be deprived of any pleasure for want of his attendance on her, yet he found very little lively enjoyment in her society; one of his firmest beliefs being contained in the phrase—"Women are all very well, you know, but they can't understand things." And feeling himself in consequence compelled, as it were, to talk down to her, when talking was necessary; and to hand her over to Merle for companionship on all possible occasions.

For this reason he rarely spoke to a woman at Oxford, eschewed tea parties as inconsistent with training—an operation he was always undergoing—and looked on Merle's aptitude for seeking consolation in the society of the weaker sex as a proof of the latter's natural effeminacy. As for flirting, Jack could as soon have taken to playing with kittens. I believe he would rather have tortured the horse that carried him than have lost his temper with a woman who loved him, or taunted her before her kisses were dry upon his lips.

For all which, the women nicknamed him "bear," and "Goth"; and finding their fascinations utterly unavailing, gave him up as a hopeless savage, revenging themselves on the stoicism which affronted them by making a special pet of the stoic's cousin.

Of a surety, if virtue be its own reward, the fair sex are not given to distributing the prizes.

Those very damsels who at heart most admired Jack's manliness and muscular Christianity, laboured with all a woman's power of destruction at reducing Merle to a mere drawing-room toy, by singing his songs, taking him shopping in their carriages, and dancing and flirting with him whenever and wherever it entered into their caprice so to do.

Under these circumstances, Master Kinnardson's "liaison" with Minnie Bruce—I wish I could give it another word, but I know no English term for an affair which has gone beyond flirtation, and in which there is no particle of real love on one side—though, as some one says, "the history of

the girl's life," was but an incident in his, and an incident of which he was beginning to feel rather weary, although he had not as yet progressed to acknowledging the same even to himself.

Her beauty—as she stood, like a pretty modern picture, set in a frame of musty folios—first touched his æsthetic tastes; and he had begun the acquaintance in the very idlest spirit of flirtation, expecting it to be taken up after the usual manner of shop girls.

His expectation was not fulfilled, and surprise was added to pleasure at the disappointment. Minnie was a great deal more like a little rustic than a pretty shop girl.

She took all his compliments in the sweetest childish earnestness; blushed like a moss rosebud at each; and answered him with an innocent naïveté, half bashful, half frank, which fairly charmed him. It took him but a very little while to discover her perfect guilelessness; still less before he had set to work to play upon it, and assist in its destruction by his flatteries and attentions. To speak the truth, she pleased and refreshed his overstrung senses, as might a delicate little wild flower a person exhausted with hothouse glories; and as he never questioned the propriety or suspected the danger of allowing himself to be thus refreshed, he just pleased his fancy by drawing her out, and winning her confidence and affection; till, worked on in his turn by finding how quickly and warmly the unspoilt little heart responded to his fooling, he caught himself one summer's evening betrayed into saying twice as much as he meant, and ten times as much as he ought; and finding Minnie sobbing out an answering confession in his arms, and murmuring a whole volume of youthful love and fidelity while he was still kissing the tears out of her blue eyes.

"Facilis descensus Averni!" The man who, from sheer weakness of character, had drifted from one idle flirtation into another, was not likely to have strength to shut his heart against real love, however fruitlessly won; and so from day to day he let Minnie go on in the dream that his attachment was as earnest and lasting as her own; and, by rather suffering her to deceive herself than deceiving her, with the idea that "some day" he meant to break down the secrecy he now insisted on, and claim her love

openly, found many an hour of rest and enjoyment in her society—hours which cost him long nights of after-remorse—hours which, at the cost of an idle, fleeting gratification, were preparing a lifetime of misery for his little companion, and bringing down a sure and heavy vengeance on his own head.

Perhaps some foresight of that vengeance, the justice which follows our lightest offences, was weighing on him now, as he glided down the river, managing his light skiff with an ease and grace which—though no oarsman where strength was required—often gained him the honour of taking some daintily-dressed damsel for a row. Enid's letter, received this morning—so bright, so sensible, yet so tender, with that graver touch which always found a response in his sensitive nature—had made him look on that trust under the willows in quite a different light to that in which it had appeared on the previous day. He felt, all of a sudden, as if he were playing a low and blackguard part; and Enid's evident belief that he was working himself to death over his studies produced a feeling, half shame, half irritation, which took all the pleasant taste off his self-indulgence.

Of course, then, he did not go?

I beg your pardon, he did.

Minnie's face was so pretty, her eyes had such a tender gleam when looking into his. It would be too bad to disappoint her; and besides, if that could be got over, there was the disappointment to himself. Altogether, by the time he had attended lecture, looked over Enid's corrections in his MS., and eaten his lunch, he had grown tired of being "good;" and the willow trees presenting themselves with renewed pleasantness to his imagination, Mr. Merle started off in search of them, trying to stifle conscience on the way, and finding it assert itself the more vigorously for the effort.

"Hallo, Kinnardthor, where are you off to?"

The shout took him by surprise; and looking up, he saw three men of his own college on the Oxfordshire shore—Middlemist and Tom White, with Jack towering above them like a Norwegian pine between two slender ash trees.

"What do you come out in such a nutshell for, Merle?" cried young Leyburn, as his cousin let the boat drift inshore. "You might have given us a lift home."

"Rather thevere on Kinnardthor'th wriths," observed Middlemist, laughing.

"Oh, Leyburn would have pulled, of course," put in White. "Fancy him sitting smoking his pipe, and Kinnardson pulling! By Jove! that would be too good."

"Too bad, you mean," laughed Merle; "I'd rather pull both you fellows together a mile than Jack a furlong. You're not so abominably heavy."

White reddened, not liking the imputation on his weight from a shrimp like Merle, and hit back—

"Thanks. Think we'd rather not. Wouldn't do to risk being upset in an attack of poetic frenzy, would it, Middlemist? By the way, what brings Apollo to the level of a waterman this afternoon? I thought he never deserted the lyre for the oar, save to propel some light nymph (I mean no aspersion on the lady's character) on the crystal wave."

"Who can tell but he goeth to pick up the nymph thomewhere?" suggested Middlemist, demurely. "Can we not thee how thwell he ith! 'Hith curly hair all parted fair, and in hith breatht a rothe.'"

All three burst out laughing, more at the effect of Middlemist's lisp on the quotation than anything else. The shaft, however, had hit too close to please Merle; and he answered sharply—

"Seems to me you have got a feeble Apollo with you—or perhaps it's only the shadow from my person," and he took up his oars again as if to pull off.

"Look here, Merle," said Jack; "if you're not going anywhere in particular, turn back with us. I'm going to have a turn at the gloves with an Oriel man before Hall. Come and see it out."

"Not this evening, Jack; I want to give my muscles a good stretch."

"Your—what?" asked White with an affectation of having heard wrongly. "Oh—I beg your pardon. Hang it, Leyburn, don't frustrate such a praiseworthy effort. Ta, ta, Kinnardson. Come and see me when they are stretched, will you? I'll lend you a suit of my togs—you'll want 'em by then—eh, Middlemist?"

"I'll order a new outfit at once to your account," said Merle, politely—"and of a stout material, to stand the arrows of the united White and Middlemist wit."

"Don't be cruthty, Kinnardthor," said Middlemist. "We'll excuthe you. It's the

old cathe of the troubadour detherting the knight to theek out hith ladye-love.

"Thinging from Palethtine,
Hither I come,
Ladye-love, ladye-love,
Welcome me home."

"If you had read up the Arthurian chivalry, Middlemist," retorted Merle, "you'd have seen that the troubadour always asked for leave of absence when the knight kept more than one court fool in his train. Good luck to you, Jack. I'll look in, in the evening, and hear how the tournament went off."

He shoved off into mid-stream as he spoke, and only heard Jack's stentorian laugh in answer; but the little passage of arms had not improved his temper, and perhaps it was just as well for Minnie that, when he did arrive at the trysting-place, she was only conspicuous by her absence. In plain English, the field was empty!

He went straight to the willow trees, and inspected a hole in the trunk of the largest, in the hope that she might have come, and being unable to wait, had left a note instead.

No such thing. His hands rummaged in vain; and after lingering about for some minutes in a state of impatient discontent, which he beguiled by cursing the delay, cursing Minnie for letting anything make her break an appointment with him, cursing himself for coming, and White and Middlemist for chaffing him, he got tired of the occupation; and walked down to his boat again, and rowed home to punish Minnie by as sharp a letter as his brain could compose.

THE CASUAL OBSERVER.

AN UNPLEASANT PLACE.

"POOF! What a horrible smell!" and by an involuntary action a handkerchief is placed to the nose, with the effect, not of stifling the horrible odour, but of filtering it, and making it leave some of its impurities behind.

"Now, do you know, I cannot smell it!" The last speaker is the superintendent of the great pumping station at Abbey Mills, near Stratford—that noble-looking, cruciform, Alhambra-like fane, with chimney shafts after the fashion of Eastern minarets, the whole standing up like a palace amidst the squalid, hideous, stench-creating factories of Bow-common. For pray do not imagine that the Observer has been paying a visit to

the home of Shakspeare, since his journey has only been by tramway from Whitechapel, just beyond where the butchers' shambles stand a-row, and the broad road is encumbered with hay carts.

We had seen the interior of the great station, with its eight vast engines, each with a twenty-seven ton beam working a couple of pumps, their united efforts lifting millions of gallons of liquid refuse from that low-level sewer, thirty-six feet, to the high-level sewer, whence it flows of its own gravity to the Thames, miles away.

We had seen all this, and now stood in what is termed the filth-house to see the dregs, scum, waifs, strays, flotsam and jetsam of the London sewage; and upon exclaiming respecting the mal-odour, our guide tells us that use has educated his sense of smelling so that he cannot detect this vile vapour which fills the building where we stand. It is a lofty, open, stone-paved place, with six large shafts yawning in the floor, and a horrible, rushing, hollow noise, as of subterranean waters hurrying along far below. And this is the case; for along three channels the sewage of twenty-five square miles of London is dashing on into the vast pump wells, to be sucked through large pumps nearly twelve feet round. But lest anything solid and hard should reach these pumps, we have the six shafts at our feet, down three of which are lowered by chains and weights as many iron-barred cages or strainers, which fit in front of the sewage channels, and through which the liquid passes, leaving its scum and larger dregs behind.

And now, while these three strainers are doing duty, other three have been raised, loaded with unutterable filth, which a couple of fork-armed men remove in barrows to a heap outside, upon which one of them, as he empties his barrow, dusts chloride of lime—the extent of man's chemistry. Nature does the rest, for it is let by contract to the market gardeners of the district, and goes to enrich their soil with phosphates, nitrates, and fertilizing salts enough to puzzle a chemist. What have we? Nothing to the extent that might be anticipated, only some two or three cartloads a day more being brought down after a storm has flushed the sewers of sediment. But there are some strange things, nevertheless. Tiny relics of humanity, telling of crimes of which baby-farming is but one outlet; rags of all kinds, once white and coloured, but such now as

no marine-store dealer would buy at the lowest price; paper, from the least shred of news, in filthy pulp; corks by the ton, in the course of the year, from those doll-like little pellets that stop the homœopath's globule tubes, through every size of phial and bottle cork, to the big and beery bung that comes sailing sedately down with the solid consequence acquired by intimacy with London's stout.

Not much in a cork; but this one tells of watching nights by a sick pillow—"One-sixth every three hours;" this again says plainly—"Here y'ar—only a penny a bottle."

That one has the marks of the wire, and stuck in a soda-water bottle's throat; that again has a stain on its bulging end—log-wood or generous port—who knows? While here again is a gouty cork, that blew out with a report when wire and string were loosed—a kingly cork this, who began life as garment to a mighty oak in a Spanish forest, and afterwards ruled in Champagne. His silvery tinfoil crown yet adheres to his head, and as he lies there prone upon the filthy heap, one thinks of fallen greatness, and of the feast or dissipated riot where he parted from his friend, the bottle.

Enough of corks. What else have we? Do not treasures come down, we ask—silver spoons, or rings—lost jewels? "No," says our guide, "the men never find anything of the kind;" but there is a peculiar twinkle in his eye, as he adds—"Nothing is ever brought to the office!"

Rush, rush, rush, rush—the water foams along below as we look at the filthy dripping cages, seeking for salient points amongst the loathsome mud, to see patches of hair, and, in another place, garbage—the refuse of some slaughterhouse—hurried into the sewers that sweep on busily always beneath our feet. The filth that might be expected to abound does not seem to exist, dissolving as it comes in the floods of water. Indeed, so little solid matter is there that, after passing through these cages, the sewage lifted by the pumps contains no very great number of grains of solid matter in the gallon, and a phial thereof in a few hours shows clear water, with a little dark sediment at the bottom.

But all the same, it is a vile odour here, for these last miles of the sewers pass through a busy manufacturing district whose chimneys vomit strange vapours,

and whose refuse passing into the sewers generates compounds of gas that float above the waters, and lurk in the channels till fired by a light, when they flash along in a deadly blaze, carrying death and destruction in their wake.

Parts of the sewers here are as dangerous as a fiery Staffordshire mine; for Bow-common has its chemical works and distilleries of strange things, factories of blood manure and dye, soap and scent. If there is a nauseous or poisonous trade to be carried on, it finds its home at Bow; and, in spite of enactment and fine, its filth gravitates to the sewers.

What more is there in this heap? The eye and understanding almost fail to tell, while the nose curls with repugnance, and refuses to lend its aid. There is grease, though, there, evidently the contribution of some sink; but it is battered out of its sixpence-like shape.

There is something here, though, whatever it may be.

Worm?

No!

Snake?

No!

Sewer leech?

No!

But all the same, it is something round, and taper, and long, limp, and black of line. A rat's tail! and behold the body that belongs—the rat himself—a long-whiskered, rodential don, with sharp white teeth; a grease-feaster, who has in his search for delicacies ventured too far from his friendly drain, and been swept down the current to one of these ghastly well-holes, where he has swum and swum till endurance failed—till he sank down—"A rat, a rat, dead for a ducat!" one of hundreds who meet the same fate, scavengers, as they are, of London's veins, and useful but for their propensity to burrow and destroy.

Another cage comes up, with a hollow, plashing noise, the foul water dripping from it fast, until it hangs suspended, and a man, hale and hearty-looking in spite of nineteen years of such work, goes up with a barrow to unload it of its burden. He thrusts in his sharp fork, and drags the dripping rubbish from the slimy bars. There is the same matted paper and rag, rotten and loathsome hair, and what seems to be bone. There is a tangle, too, of cane, which tells of fashionable distension. On the water

that drips there are iridescent hues that glisten in the light—tar-oil these, escaped from some works where manure and magenta aniline dyes are born. Again, too, there is a relic of poor silly fashion in these springy, oxidized wires, half covered with cotton, and held together by scraps of rotten tape—hoops these—the so-called crinoline. France is twenty miles across the Channel, but far too near for our comfort, as proved by the strange modes. But enough of the filth-house for one day—an interesting place, and, in connection with the sewers and pumping-works, a monument worthy of comparison with the vaunted works of Latin hands, but bearable only by an educated sense of smell.

THE ABDUCTION OF THE O'BANAGHER.

CHAPTER V.

"SO it's yerself that's in it, Johnny Corrigan, is it?" inquired Larry, laughing, in spite of his desire to conduct an important inquiry with due solemnity.

"Yes, it *is* meself, an' I tell ye ye'll rue this day's work bitterly. What d' ye mane by it—at all?" gasped out Corrigan, panting hard.

"Is it what do I mane by it ye want to know? Well, I mane where's The O'Banagher, ye murdherin' varmint?" said Larry, giving him a violent shake just to stimulate his memory.

"I know nothing about The O'Banagher, but I know you, Larry; an' mark my words, ye'll repent this outrage."

"Oh! so I'll repent it, will I, Misther Corrigan—raycently a bum-bailiff—then a dishonest agint—and now a murdherin' vagabond. So this is yer gratitude to a masther that might have thransported ye when he only dismissed ye! Where's the masther, ye pettifoggin' six an' eightpence, ye?"

"I tell ye I don't know," said the other, sulkily, and trying to release his arm from the tightening grip of Mike, who had secured him on one side.

"Arrah! sweet bad luck t' ye, Misther Corrigan; an' p'raps ye don't know this spur ayther?"

And Larry dangled the spur before the astonished man's gaze. The wretched creature dropped his eyes as they encoun-

tered the implement; but he maintained silence.

"Now, Mike," said Larry, addressing his assistant, "get a tight hould av him."

Mike, obeying the direction of his chief, pinioned the captive by both arms; and Larry, walking in front of him, cocked his pistol and presented it, holding it in dangerous proximity to the victim's head.

"Now, Johnny Corrigan, tell me this minit where ye've hid the masther, or be me sowl I'll shoot ye down like a dog."

"I tell ye, Larry, I don't know. Arrah! why should I know more nor another?"

"You don't know! Well, I'm sorry for ye, that's all. It 'ud be something to die in definse av a saycret; but it's a poor thing intirely to be shot in a boreen just for bein' a blackguard, an' that's what I'll shoot *you* for. Stand clear, Mike!"

Saying which, Larry stepped back a pace or two to take aim. There was a determined air about his executioner that fairly overcame Corrigan. He shouted out in agony—

"Don't shoot me, Larry, for the love of God! Sure is it afther murdherin' a fellow-crayther ye'd be? Don't shoot me, an' I'll tell ye all about it, avick!"

Mike resumed his vice-like hold, and Larry simply remarked—

"Well, take us to him, thin!"

He then took his unengaged arm, and so they marched him up the lane between them. There was silence for some moments—broken by Corrigan, who, in snivelling accents, said—

"Mind, Larry, it's not meself is in this business at all. I know where they've hid him, an' I'll show ye the place, too, av ye'll let me off. Promise ye'll let me off, Larry darlin'."

"I'll promise ye nothin', ye black-hearted scoundhrel, exceptin' this, av ye come wid us an find the masther, I'll make ye a prisint av yer dhirty life—an' it's meself wouldn't take a prisint av it; an' av ye desave us, I'll blow yer brains out."

Corrigan lifted his eyes in a devout manner—

"Well, Heaven above be me witness," he said, "I've nothin' at all at all to do wid this business, only it's bad hands I've fallen into intirely. Sure, I'd rather have me hand cut off than hurt a hair of The O'Banagher's head—God bless him!"

"Howld yer whist and lade the way," re-

plied Larry, pricking him in the shin with the spur. The three then marched in dead silence through the deserted lane. They had not proceeded very far before they caught sight of the thatch of a mud hovel peering over the ditch. A little farther on was a wooden gate much fallen to decay, with the useless rusty padlock hanging hopelessly on one of its bars.

"That's it," said Corrigan, nodding towards the gate. So they went through it, and approached the hovel.

It was a damp, untenanted hut, built of stones and mud, one of its walls being to all appearance formed of the ditch itself. A few melancholy trophies of a life that had once been lived in it lay in front. The foetid pool in which the ducks had been wont to disport themselves, an old iron pot considerably the worse for wear and exposure to the weather, the remnants of a barrow, a broom handle divorced from its better half—all these things, rotten or rotting, told how long ago the dwelling place had been condemned as uninhabitable. Larry stopped not to investigate these relics; but, dragging the unwilling guide after him, pushed open the door of the hovel, and all three crossed the threshold together.

"Knock him down an' sit on him," said Larry, sententiously, to Mike.

Mike knocked Corrigan down on his face, and sat on his prostrate form, as desired.

Larry looked round the miserable and ill-lighted apartment, and soon descried, seated in its remotest corner, The O'Banagher.

He sat so motionless and so silent, that at first Larry feared that he was gazing upon that mangled corpse for the appearance of which the *Eagle* had in some measure prepared him. On approaching more nearly, however, he discovered that The O'Banagher was indeed alive, but pinioned and gagged, so as to render speech and motion impossible.

"Och, mashter darlin', is it murdered ye are? Sure, it's meself knew I'd find ye av ye were above ground at all. Spake to me, mashter dear—spake to me!"

And the affectionate creature, almost crying with joy, proceeded to remove the gag and to undo the cruel knots of the rope. The O'Banagher, who had been ruefully anticipating a lingering death by starvation, gave way to one of those impulses of nature with which monarch and subject are alike

occasionally afflicted, threw himself upon Larry's neck—Larry stooping in order that the ceremony might be effectively performed—and called him his brave deliverer, his guardian angel, &c., &c. Pity 'tis that the vulgar appetites of the body should so often set aside the delicious sentiments of the soul.

Having expressed his gratitude in words almost poetical, The O'Banagher looked at his servant, and remarked with peculiar pathos—

"Larry, I'm as hungry as the deuce. I haven't tasted food since this time yesterday."

"Och, musha, d'ye hear that, now?" said Larry, giving a vicious kick to the recumbent body of Corrigan. "An' meself niver brought bit or sup wid me. We'd better get back at wanst to Mrs. Connor's. We can tie this scoundhrel up an' take him along wid us."

"Can't you shoot him here?" suggested the member for Ballymarun.

"Faith, I wouldn't be afther robbin' the hangman, sor!" said Larry.

Corrigan was assisted to his legs, considerably crushed by the incubus of Mike's body—for Mike was the broth of a boy, and no light weight, you see. The little rebel was bathed in tears, and called Heaven, earth, and The O'Banagher to witness that it was none of his doing—that he was the helpless implement in the hands of a ferocious monster—that— But Larry cut short his lamentations by presenting his pistol, and solemnly declaring that, if he indulged in so much as another syllable, he would thereupon send his soul into the other world. They then secured his arms to his sides, and corded him carefully.

When he had been tied, Larry caught hold of one end of the rope and Mike of the other. So they dragged him from the hovel and regained the lane. The O'Banagher brought up the rear with the pistols, one in each hand—cocked and presented at the caitiff's head, in readiness to punish with instant death any ill-considered attempt to escape in that direction.

And that is the history of the abduction and recovery of The O'Banagher. What remains to be told may be done in a few words.

I happened to be in the town of Bally-

marun when The O'Banagher made his triumphal entry. It was an exciting and imposing spectacle. The streets were thronged with a rejoicing populace. Murphy stood in the first floor window of the *Eagle* office, delivering fervid orations. Beneath him fluttered an enormous placard, announcing a third edition of the local organ, containing an account of "The Romantic Discovery of The O'Banagher by his own Body Servant. Price One Penny."

At last, the procession from Isnagarran entered the town. First came the military; behind the military, The O'Banagher, mounted on Fin MacCool; following the chief came Mike and Larry; behind them the constabulary, with Corrigan, bound and broken-hearted, in their midst. Their progress through the enthusiastic crowd was naturally slow; tumultuous cheer upon tumultuous cheer rang through the air as the chieftain entered the town. He lifted his hunting-cap; his gay uniform, a little muddy and crumpled, dazzled the eyes of the beholders. He placed his glass in his eye, and smiled sweetly, bowing to the men, and gallantly kissing his hand to the women. I followed with the mob through the town and out of it—followed with the mob till the procession arrived at Castle Banagher—when I saw the monarch enter his gates, on the supporters of which were emblazoned the family arms—two Irish bulls rampant. Back to the town again, where flags fluttered, and tar barrels blazed, and everybody was in a transport of delight, and a condition of demoralization hitherto unknown in the respectable village.

Months and months afterwards, revisiting the scene, I was informed of one or two facts which I must append as a sequel. Corrigan was transported; Brophy was never captured; The O'Banagher married Miss Mulligan. Owing to vexatious political complications which it was out of the little monarch's power to prevent, he was obliged to vacate the seat, which is now held by Desmond O'Brallagan, the notorious Home Ruler. I am informed that Castle Banagher has been sold by public auction, and that its late proprietor lives quietly enough with his wife in Merrion-square, Dublin. Gossips further allege that it is probable that he will be the last of his Royal House.

THE END.

PUTTING ONE'S FOOT IN IT.

READER, have you ever "put your foot in it"? I know you have, some time or another. Every one must be acquainted with the indescribable thrill which passes through him on finding that he has committed himself. You are perhaps holding an interesting conversation at a musical party with a young lady to whom you were introduced a few minutes ago, while another young lady, at the piano, is giving a general invitation to the company to "meet her once again." You remark in an off-hand way, "Wretched voice that girl's got—pity they let her sing," when, glancing from the performer to your companion, you suddenly realize that they match like two volumes in a set, both being neatly got up in book muslin and green trimmings. A shudder passes through you, and it does not require the lady's distant manner to tell you that the fair performer is her sister. Of course, you proceed to talk wildly about nothing at all, hoping against hope that your remark was unheard; but the conversation, such as it is, flags, and you take an early opportunity of slipping away from the offended sister. Or perhaps, at another time, while talking to a friend on amusements in general, you remark casually that you hate backgammon, and only play it when driven to do so. It is not until half an hour afterwards that it flashes across you that, on the very last occasion on which you were at this friend's house, you spent two long hours in rattling the dice and in taking and being taken up.

Such contretemps as these must at times fall to everybody's lot, but there is a certain class of individuals whose fate it seems to be to "put their foot in it" on every available occasion. There are some unhappy men who are perpetually floating calmly and unconsciously into the very midst of a dilemma, and then floundering helplessly about like a fish in a net. Or else, as some of them do, floating in and out again with mild complacency, unconscious of any harm, while every one present tries to assume the same appearance of happy unconsciousness.

Take young Mr. Chaffinch, for instance. He would not intentionally say anything personal for worlds, and yet he can scarcely open his lips without committing himself in some way. He has been within an ace of having his head punched two or three times by certain irascible victims of his unfortu-

nate speeches, when all the time he was under the impression he was saying something very complimentary or very witty. So sure as there is an opening for Mr. Chaffinch's special faculty, so sure is he to take advantage of it. He rather prides himself on filling up awkward pauses in conversation; and if he can do nothing better, he will ask a riddle. Unfortunately, his riddles are generally personal. Conversation having flagged in the middle of dinner, Mr. Chaffinch thinks he cannot do better than set it going again by asking one of his pet riddles. It so happens that his opposite neighbour is a lawyer; what can be more appropriate, then, than to ask the company generally, and this gentleman in particular, the well-known riddle about the resemblance between a lawyer and an uneasy person in bed? Everybody wonders and looks at the ceiling, and Mr. Chaffinch smiles blandly. At last they give it up, and Mr. Chaffinch does the same with the answer. Now, the riddle, although it may be a good one, is hardly complimentary to the legal profession; so the answer falls flat, and the lawyer seems to see the joke less than any one. If a riddle does not happen to strike him, Mr. Chaffinch makes conversation by saying playfully across the table—

"I saw you the other day, Mrs. Macaw."

"Yes?" says the lady, with a sweet smile. "Where was that?"

"Ah! I wonder where: can't you guess?" returns Mr. Chaffinch, smiling. "The Miss Macaws were with you," he adds, as a sort of assistance to Mrs. Macaw's memory.

"Wherever could it have been? Do tell," scream the three Miss Macaws in chorus.

Everybody's attention is now aroused. Mr. Chaffinch's heart is not adamant; and at last, as if he were giving an answer to one of his riddles, he says, "It was at the corner of Tottenham Court-road;" and then he goes on as if the best part were still to come—"You were just getting out of a 'bus."

As Mrs. Macaw and her daughters are never supposed to ride in any more public vehicle than a hired brougham at least, it is as well for Mr. Chaffinch's peace of mind that he does not hear the remarks that are made about him by the four ladies when they go home.

Although Mr. Chaffinch is always getting into trouble when he is in company, in his

own family he gets on smoothly enough. It is only when he is engaged in making polite conversation that his mishaps occur, and at home one seldom is so overwhelmed with a sense of politeness as to manufacture conversation.

Poor Mr. Jones is the man to put his foot in it at home. He lives in a state of continual dread of what his next words may bring upon him. It is hardly his fault, poor man; as he is blessed with that most trying of all possessions, a partner of an uncertain temper. Not that she scolds—oh, no; but she is one of those ladies who, in their own opinion, suffer a perpetual martyrdom.

Mr. Jones has been married twice, and, according to the present Mrs. Jones, he is always referring to the deceased in terms detrimental to his present spouse.

He is a great man for reminiscences, and if he happens to begin—

"When poor Eliza was alive—"

"There, I'm sure it's a pity I am not in my grave," breaks in the injured Mrs. Jones. "You are always talking in that way. I know you wish I was dead."

"I was only going to say, my dear," remonstrates Mr. Jones, pathetically, "that when Eliza was alive, meat was a penny a pound cheaper than it is now."

"Yes," returns the martyr, not to be pacified, "and I know you think I have something to do with the price of the meat. But, never mind, I shall be gone soon, and you will be able to have another Eliza."

At this stage Mrs. Jones's feelings are generally too much for her, and she has recourse to her pocket handkerchief.

If on another occasion Mr. Jones happens to remark, "Isn't this chicken a little tough, my dear?" his spouse replies with a resigned air—

"I can never do anything right. I chose that chicken myself. You are always complaining."

"Oh, I am not complaining," hastily puts in the meek Mr. Jones. "In fact, I—I rather like it tough."

One of his friends happened to quote in Mr. Jones's hearing, the other day, the old proverb—

"Think twice before you speak once."

"Ah!" murmured Mr. Jones, with a sigh, "I generally think half-a-dozen times, and then say something wrong after all."

There are some unfortunate individuals who are always getting into hot water with

the other members of their family, by injudiciously dragging things from behind the scenes which in reality should remain in the farthest background. The Tomkinses, for example, have a brother who means well, and who is old enough to know better; but he is always making unhappy remarks.

In the middle of dinner he will call across the table—

"Oh, Eliza, I took that chig. of yours to the hairdresser. He says it's all right, and you shall have it back to-morrow."

Young Mr. Arundel, whom Eliza admires so much—in fact, she is quietly setting her chignon at him—looks aghast, both on account of the delicate nature of the communication, and also at finding that the adorable chignon is false.

Poor Eliza is so overcome that she can say nothing.

Old Mr. Tomkins is nearly as bad as his son; and Eliza has hardly cooled from the effects of her brother's remark, when the old gentleman suddenly says—

"Why, Eliza, what have you got your best earrings on for?"

The simple old gentleman has no tact. Mrs. T. noticed the earrings a quarter of an hour ago, but said nothing. Was not Mr. Arundel's presence sufficient explanation for any sensible parent?

After Mr. Arundel has gone, Eliza fires up at her brother.

"Tom, how could you say that about my chignon before Mr. Arundel?"

And turning to Mr. Tomkins, senior, she adds, in an injured tone—

"And, papa, I wish you would not make remarks about my dress when strangers are present."

Father and son look rather sheepish; but murmur something about not seeing any harm in it.

Another of those who are always putting their foot in it, and with whom we have little sympathy, is the would-be funny man. If he only knew the amount of anything but good wishes which he almost daily brings down upon his unconscious head, we think that it would take all his funniness out of him for the rest of his days. His wit seldom rises above a pun; but we will say for him, that he seldom misses an opportunity of displaying it in this form. Personal or otherwise, a pun is a pun to him, and out it must come. If at a friendly gathering there should happen to be a Mr.

Graves present, our funny man would, without the least hesitation, ask him, in a tone evidently intended for the rest of the company to hear, whether he is not a very sly dog.

Mr. Graves of course looks rather mystified, but says that he does not know that he is.

"Oh! rejoins our friend, "I thought you must be, because most graves are deep."

Mr. Graves seems to bear out the character given him, for he certainly conceals his admiration of the pun very effectually.

On another occasion, when his family have a few friends spending the evening with them, and when they wish to appear specially genteel, he will shock all their nerves by asking his daughter Jane whether she buys her plums by the dozen, as she has put so few in the cake. Jane, who is not supposed to have so much as seen the cake till the last few minutes, much less to have made it, expresses her opinion to her misguided parent concerning this question at the close of the evening, in the privacy of his own family.

It is only a person here and there who has the peculiar faculty of putting his foot in it in cases like the foregoing; but there are occasions when even such cautious people as you and I, reader, are liable to be caught tripping. One of the most fruitful sources of danger in this respect, and against which no one is entirely proof, is the double entendre. We remember an instance which happened to ourselves. We were dining out at the time, and had next us one of those spinster ladies of uncertain age, who always make a point of enjoying to their full extent the good things of this life. She had just been helped to her third glass of champagne, and while it was still effervescing she remarked, with a delightful simper—

"How it froths!"

Wishing to follow up the remark, we said, in a moralizing tone—

"Yes, but it goes down very quickly."

Now, reader, we have a tender heart, and would not willingly hurt the feelings of a tadpole, so you may imagine our distress when we observed immediately afterwards the double meaning of our words.

We always pity those poor men who can never make the smallest attempt at a speech without going through a succession of absurd blunders, chiefly in the shape of doubles entendres. They generally see them themselves

directly they have made them, and the consequence is they are in a perpetual state of correcting and explaining what they said a moment before. There are few men who, having committed themselves by any unlucky remark, are able to withdraw from the dilemma gracefully; and as a result of our cogitations on this subject, we think we may lay down the following aphorism, "that the man is well bred who never puts his foot in it; but he is better bred who, having put it in, is able to take it out again with success."

OFF THE TRACK IN NORWAY.—II.

THE mountain we were attacking stands completely out of the track followed by the generality of visitors to Norway, and is very seldom ascended, although the actual difficulties of the ascent are inconsiderable. The first half of the way, after leaving the soeter, lies over vast masses of bare, bleak rocks, with here and there a little reindeer moss growing between them, and the second half is made up of snow and ice slopes of varying steepnesses. With an axe and a rope there would not be the slightest difficulty in traversing these slopes; but travelling as it is the custom to do in Norway, with neither of these protective accessories, the danger of a slip on some of the ice slopes of the upper portions of this mountain is by no means remote, and there is no telling where an animate or inanimate object would stop when once fairly launched upon them. We reached the summit, however, after some seven hours' climbing, without any mishap, and an exultant shout and waving of hats proclaimed that at last all Scandinavia lay beneath us, with no inch of her soil above.

From the crown of the "old Norse giant" the view is unique of its kind. Away and away, far as the eye can wander, there are huge and monstrous shapes, the fantastic freaks of Mother Nature, all covered with eternal snow, on which the sun glistens with a bewildering brightness and whiteness. Yonder to the north, the bleak regions of the Dovre Fjeld stretch in almost unbroken solitude; far away to the south, the Jostedal glaciers rear up their frozen waves; and all around are the monarchs of the Sonde Fjeld, the grandest group of Titans ever ruled over by Odin or by Thor.

The cold on the top of the mountain was, notwithstanding the sun, intense, so that we

did not delay our journey down so long as we might otherwise have done. The course we pursued in descending lay over a mountain called Stygge Braen, or Bad Mountain, so named from the treacherous nature of its snows, which are full of hidden crevasses, the presence of which can only be discovered by the most practised eye, and very often not even by that. With a good stout rope and a pleasant party of four, well linked together, we might have gone floundering merrily and harmlessly on through the snow, indifferent as to crevasses or no crevasses; but walking singly, in a state of entire uncertainty as to whether or no the next step may launch one into darkness, is rather ticklish work, and in Switzerland would be looked upon as only one remove from insanity.

No harm happened to our party, however, and we got quit of the snow without the loss even of a single individual. The next part of the journey lay over rocks flung about in reckless confusion, as though Master Thor in the old time had taken to making roads, and, growing tired of his work, had left it only half completed.

It was past twelve o'clock at night before the haven of refuge, long hoped-for, and long pictured in our minds' eyes, appeared in view in the shape of a log hut. Upon the door of this cabin we thundered with all the strength left in our worn-out frames. Presently a gaunt creature, in the similitude of a woman, opened the door, and we crept in, and found an apartment in which were two rough bedsteads covered with skins. The good woman had evidently just vacated one bed, while a boy was peacefully reclining in the other. After partaking of milk and flod brod, my friend and myself ensconced ourselves beneath the covering from which our hostess had so recently emerged, and forthwith unconsciousness ensued, for we slept a sleep that night which nearly rivalled in intensity the repose of Rip van Winkle himself; and twelve hours rolled by before we again awoke to the world.

Our journey over the great Sonde Fjeld took us through one of the most desolate regions to be met with in all Norway, but I must not so outrage the forbearance of my readers as to pause to describe it now; suffice it to say that we reached the Fjord, and duly sailing along its narrow waters, arrived at Gudvangen, from whence we crossed over to the Hardjanger Fjord, and taking boat

came on Saturday night to Uttne, one of the choicest spots in all Scandinavia. The place stands on the shores of the Hardjanger Fjord, and is composed of a cluster of cottages surrounded with gardens rich in roses and fruit trees. It is approached by no kind of road, and access must be obtained to it by water, as the everlasting hills completely surround it, leaving only room for a few acres of hill pasture and corn land immediately around the village.

There is a goodly station at "this village by the sea," presided over by an ancient dame of comely form and winning manners. The old lady is assisted in her duties by her fair daughter, Thorbjorn, who, no matter what the weather may be without the house, must surely make it seem like summer all the long year round within, for—

"A form more fair, a face more sweet,
It ne'er hath been my lot to meet."

Amid the pleasant bowers of this small northern Paradise, a Sunday wore itself away; and on the Monday morning the quarters, like Mr. Tennyson's Miller's Daughter, "had grown so dear—so dear" that we could not make up our minds finally to quit them.

We therefore arranged to make an excursion to the top of a neighbouring mountain, the shining precipices of which, on the other side of the Fjord, formed the most prominent feature in the landscape visible from the windows of our bed-room. This mountain, all unknown to fame, is called the Oxen; and from its summit the view of the long arms of the numerous Fjords into which the coast is divided is most curious.

A youthful Charon ferried us across the water to a small landing place on the other side, and then undertook to guide us by a narrow ravine to the height of our ambition and the object of our desires—viz., the summit of the hill. After about four hours' stiffish climbing, we completed the 4,500 feet of ascent from the water's edge, and reached the storm-scarred, weather-worn cairn which marks the mountain's head. The extraordinary panorama of land and water spread out below fairly compensated for the parched lips and panting lungs which the climb had imposed upon us. As I write, I have a most natural desire to paint in glowing terms and in probably somewhat exaggerated language, after the manner of travellers, the wonders of the vision we

beheld from the Oxen's topmost crag; but I will on this occasion, out of respect to the feelings of both my old and young readers, waive any such description, and proceed at once to give a short account of what I have a somewhat uncomfortable presentiment my patient readers will conceive to have been an act of sheer, unadulterated idiocy.

There enters sometimes into both men and boys a strange, mysterious impulse which seems to lead them almost irresistibly into folly. It is an unaccountable desire to risk both life and limb for no conceivable object; a feeling something akin, perhaps, to that rapture of the fight which Lord Byron sings so grandly of. At no time is this impulse felt more strongly than upon the mountains, when the free, fresh air that whistles over the snow, and intoxicates more potently than strong wine, has had its due effect. This madness came upon me on the summit of the Oxen, and I succumbed to it.

Purposely lagging behind, after guide and friend had departed, I proceeded to put my plan into execution. The plan was simply this, to climb straight down the face of the cliff to the shores of the Fjord, and there await in exultant triumph, as I fondly dreamt, my less adventurous companions.

Inspired with this ambition, I worked with extraordinary energy and perseverance to overcome the preliminary difficulties of the enterprise, grappling with every obstacle as it arose with an almost ferocious impetuosity, and for a time my efforts seemed tolerably successful, and I made fair progress. But speedily I came into a place where it became clear, even to my excited brain, that neither energy nor impetuosity would suffice to bring matters to a satisfactory issue. In a word, the cliff became too smooth and perpendicular to proceed farther, except at a speed which, to a man not tired of life, would have been altogether inconvenient; so, as it was also impossible to move along diagonally, I took the only course left, and, curbing my ardour, began to scramble back in the way I had come; and then, by making my way to the right, to essay a downward course once more. With considerable difficulty I put this idea into execution, and succeeded in getting below the evil place which had so annoyingly baffled me; but presently the cliff became one bare, smooth, even sweep of rock for

perhaps 1,200 or 1,300 feet, without an impediment at all sufficient to stop any object that once got any impetus upon it from toppling from the summit of the precipice to the bottom. Still, as the die was now completely cast, there was nothing for it but to grapple with the evil, and if possible, with much caution, to overcome it; so I commenced the combat by holding on with hands, and feet, and eyelids, so to speak, at the same time lowering each foot on to any little knob or ledge that might afford the smallest particle of foothold. In this way I laboured for some time; but gradually the cliff grew steeper and smoother, and the knobs and irregularities more and more scanty, until at last I found that I had reached a spot where there was absolutely no resting place for either hands or feet, save the tiny ledge to which I was clinging. As I looked down for a moment in bewilderment as to the best course to pursue, I fell into the folly of speculating as to the results of a slip; and as the foolish thought swept through my mind, the very contingency I was dreading really came about: my treacherous boots, which were partially iron-shod, seemed to slide from under me, and I shot away down the polished wall, gathering impetus every moment. With hands, elbows, and heels I made desperate and convulsive efforts to stay my course. I clutched at every tiny knob of rock; I pressed my hands and elbows against the hard, smooth surface, but all unavailingly, as the speed of my descent quickened terribly. I remember crying out in startled agony to Heaven, and thinking that at last I had indeed flung my life away, when I felt my heel suddenly anchor on some small projection, and became conscious that my course was arrested. As soon as I had a little composed my trembling limbs and soothed my agitated nerves, I began to take stock of the position, and was not long in coming to the conclusion that I had scant cause for congratulating myself much on it. I have been, both before and since that day, in several "tight" places in the Alps and elsewhere, but that was certainly the tightest. I was balanced on a tiny ledge of rock, an inch or so in breadth, which only extended a yard or two on either hand, and then became merged in the smooth, cruel wall of stone.

Three thousand feet below, the waters of the Hardjanger Fjord were lapping the crags;

fifteen hundred feet above, the frowning summit of the mountain stood out clear cut against the sky; to the right hand and to the left there stretched the smooth implacable face of the cliff, with no lines denoting pity or kindly help upon it. I could see the white cottages of Utne, surrounded with fields all yellow with God's "waving gold;" and nearer still the broad bosom of the water, with scarcely a ripple upon it; and far away in the distance the snow-capped hills on which Thor and Odin played such pranks in the days long since gone by; but the landscape was to me as less than nothing and vanity, and the stern features of the pitiless face of the cliff close around were the only objects that I cared to study. My sensations were not pleasant—I objected to terminating my budding career on the lonely rocks of an obscure Norwegian mountain; and yet, as I looked down on the long sweep of the precipice, that unpleasant contingency would persist in forcing itself on my mind, for it was clear that I could not remain there always, and to move either up or down appeared equally impossible. Four miles away a dog barked, but the sound only seemed to make the solitude more intense, and the thought of dying thus alone was absolutely intolerable. In despair I raised my eyes upwards, and saw the heavens, and

"They were clear and blue,
And in the liquid ether
The eye of God shone through."

So I resolved to make a desperate effort, at any rate, to escape from the fix into which my folly had brought me.

The tiny ledge on which I was resting became melted away into the cliff on each side of me; but I noticed here and there, at varying distances, similar ledges, which I determined on attempting to reach. The first thing to be done was to divest myself of my boots, in order to obtain a firmer hold upon the rock; and this was, in the position I then occupied, a not altogether easy task, as standing on one heel on a narrow ledge while you are incontinently tugging at the other, is no doubt pleasant enough for an acrobat, but for a plain tourist it is apt to be embarrassing. However, I happily succeeded in getting quit of both my under-standings, and in stowing them away in my side pockets. Thus relieved, I entered upon the task of extrication; and after about an hour of breathless anxiety, in which I

played the rôle of an unhappy fly clinging to a pane of glass, I succeeded in getting off the smooth rock on to a stone of a much softer description. For a time I made better progress; but presently a sheer precipice presented itself, which utterly baffled every effort to overcome it. Just then my attention was turned to a torrent of water, which came roaring down from the snows at the top of the mountain. This was on my right hand, and I conceived that by climbing some little distance back I might possibly manage to get into its course. With considerable difficulty, and by the help of a pretty long fall, I succeeded in carrying this plan into execution. I then discovered that I had gained a cleft in the face of the rock along which the stream ran for some twenty yards or so, when it fell away in a waterfall of considerable height over a smooth polished face of rock. To slide down with the rush of the water appeared to me to be the only means of escape from the place, as on both sides of the ravine were precipices to all appearance inaccessible. So I determined to make the trial and shoot the rapid; and was actually on the point of launching away, when the thought intruded itself into my harassed mind that I should get so mangled on the rocks as in all probability to incapacitate me for further efforts; so I gave up the idea, and abandoned the thought of progress in that direction.

I next turned my attention to the possibility of climbing up the torrent; but here again I was speedily checkmated, for the comparatively level ground between the high cliffs presented such facilities for harbouring snow that the way was completely choked up by it; and as there was a running stream of water constantly passing under the accumulation, a tunnel some eight feet in height had been formed, which baffled all my efforts to surmount.

I was now as completely imprisoned as any shipwrecked mariner on his raft, or captive in his dungeon; and as the mariner eagerly scans the far horizon in hopes of seeing a friendly sail, so did I look out wistfully over the water to the white cottages of Utne, longing for deliverance; and as the captive beats against the bars of his cell, and seeks carefully for some flaw in its walls or gratings by which escape may be accomplished, so did I vainly bruise my limbs against the rocks and stones, and with abounding interest scrutinize the position, if

haply I might find some way out of the dilemma. But the problem was not to be easily solved; so, after partaking of a copious draught of water, I sat down on a stone to contemplate the position in as calm a frame of mind as circumstances would permit. The idea of having voluntarily imprisoned myself, although somewhat ludicrous, was to me by no means amusing; and the prospect of having to spend the night supperless and cold, half-way up a black cliff, was the reverse of entertaining; so I stamped up and down the little space at my disposal, speaking of my folly in no measured terms.

The more I looked at the waterfall at the base of my prison, the less inviting a plunge down it appeared; the more I regarded the snow which bounded the upper portion of my cell, the more impassable that way appeared; and a renewed careful scrutiny of the cliffs which formed the walls of my dungeon only seemed to make them more and more inaccessible. The only possible egress apparently was by the way down which I had fallen into my prison; and as this course, even if I succeeded in effecting a passage by it, would only take me back to the exact place I had left so gladly some time before, I looked upon it simply as a means of escape from the Cave of Scylla to the cruel rocks of Charybdis. However, variety is pleasing, even in misfortune; so I determined to make the attempt to scale the cliff, down which I had rolled some hour or so before. Again and again the attempt was a failure; but at last, after long patience and great tribulation, I managed to scramble back to the very same position I had occupied some time before. I then crawled along the face of the cliff for some distance; and after another hour or so of breathless anxiety, got back into the water-course, at a point just below the waterfall, which had for so long baffled me. From this point my progress became much easier; and although the ravine down which the torrent rushed was an exceedingly rough road to travel, and my body rapidly became one uniform bruise from the numerous slips I made on the rocks, yet it was a path of asphalt when compared with the pitiless cliff I had just left.

Presently I descried, far away below me, two figures excitedly waving their hands and indulging in various extravagant gestures. These I soon discovered to be my long-lost guide and companion, whom I

speedily succeeded in reaching, and with them glided back rejoicing across the Fjord in blissful security to Utne.

TABLE TALK.

ON the 6th of December we ventured to call attention to an indignation meeting of chemists and druggists, who were angry at not being allowed to sell their simples in a sophisticated state. The note has drawn the following from the organ of the above trades. It is worthy of notice for its thoroughly gentlemanly spirit, and the absence therein of all that is little and mean. "N.B.—This is rote sarcastic."—A. WARD:—

"A correspondent at Plymouth is good enough to call our attention to a paragraph in *Once a Week*, in which some writer vainly attempts to imitate the liveliness of the *Pall Mall Gazette*. After referring to the 'insolence' of druggists, in not quite grammatical language, because they are determined 'to ask permission to sell adulterated drugs,' he adds—'Speaking from our own experience, we can say that a prescription made up at the ordinary chemist's means one thing, and that made up at Apothecaries' Hall another.' We can find nothing else in *Once a Week* of the smallest interest."

Further comment is needless.

THE RUSSIANS have just had a grand ceremony, with gorgeous procession, to bless the River Neva. By all means let us follow in imitation if it would purify that which, in spite of Barking outfall, daily becomes more and more of a filthy open sewer.

APROPPOS of the dissolution, a politician says that Gladstone and Lowe should be termed the political Maskelyne and Cooke, who, after keeping it closed so long, have now thrown open and displayed the secrets of their Cabinet. The next thing is the box trick. Mr. Gladstone is to be sacked, sealed, and boxed, the box is to be corded, and, no matter what precautions are taken, he is to be free in a few seconds. Presumably this applies to the trammels of office. Fancy life and housekeeping without the income tax! It is too much!

IN Mr. LATOUR TOMLINE'S new piece of absurdity at the Globe Theatre, Mr. Comp-ton, as a police sergeant in charge of the cells, exclaims, while reflecting on the innocence of prisoners—"I wonder where all the guilty people go to? They don't come here. They all say they are innocent."

This, of course, produces a laugh. "Whim-ple says they all go into the police," he adds; and then, as soon as the laugh has subsided, he remembers that he himself never makes jokes in uniform; and with serious aspect he says, solemnly—"That is Whimple's joke."

IT IS SAID that Messrs. Sanger, of Ast-ley's, have purchased the Hall by the Sea of Messrs. Spiers and Pond. Why? For what purpose? Are we to have a circus at Margate, with real sea horses and a mermaiden ballet? Something might be also done with performing lobsters. Mr. Lloyd has some at the Crystal Palace which can "fence like Christians."

SIR WILLIAM BODKIN has resigned his post of assistant judge for Middlesex, and the magisterial red-tape that has for so long passed under his eye will be tied by a younger man.

COAL MERCHANTS are open to polite re-bukes, and quite ready to take a hint. A friend who had dealt for some years with the same firm, found his last two instalments of tons shot down into his cellar very indifferent as to quality. He had them—as far as was possible—burned, without making a sign until more were wanted, when he sent an order with this addition:—"Mr. Houseman will feel obliged if Messrs. Walls-end, Seaborne, and Co. would give orders to the men who deliver the fresh coals, to bring back in the sacks the slates, stones, and shale remaining from the last three tons, for they fill up the cellar in an inconvenient way, and the dustmen absolutely refuse to cart them off as the refuse of the ash-bin." It was effectual. "By Jove, sir," said Houseman the other day, "look at that! I never had such coals before in my life. They cake, and bubble with gas. Try it, sir—try it!"

Contributions should be legibly written, and only on one side of each leaf.

Communications to the Editor should be addressed to the Office, 19, Tavistock-street, Covent-garden, W.C. All Contributions are attentively considered, and unaccepted MSS. are returned on receipt of stamps for postage; but the Editor cannot hold himself responsible for any accidental loss. No unaccepted MSS. will be returned until a written application has been made for them.

Terms of Subscription for ONCE A WEEK, free by post:—Weekly Numbers for Six Months, 5s. 5d.; Monthly Parts, 5s. 8d.

ONCE A WEEK

NEW SERIES.

No. 319.

February 7, 1874.

Price 2d.

JACK'S SISTER; OR, WOMANLY PAST QUESTION.

CHAPTER XI.
A STORM BREWS.



HAD beaten the Oriel man; and his friends were collected in the hero's room, blowing great clouds of tobaccosmoke, and partaking of beer, "nogg," and whiskey to-day to any amount; their host himself restricting his libations to one glass of weak brandy and water, out of compliment to the captain of the University boat, then present, a martinet, who was holding up the laws of training with extra severity just then, in prospect of the Easter match.

Among the muscular set assembled, however, might be found one of other tastes—Merle. According to promise, he had dropped in, and was comfortably settled in a corner by the fire, with a cigar in his mouth and a glass of toddy on his knees, when the scout tapped at the door; and coming round to him, whispered that the boy from his quarters was waiting outside with a note, which he declined to give to any one but his master.

Merle mentally despatched the boy to Hades, drained his glass, and went out with the servant as desired.

"Sorry to disturb you, sir," the latter

said, civilly; "but the little chap as bring it wouldn't give it no one but you, and as I knowed you was particular about your letters, I brought him round; tho', says I, gents never likes to be worried when they're—"

"There—cut the rest, please," said Merle. "Where is the boy?"

"Down in the quad, sir; I left him at the door."

"All right—that'll do;" and striding down into the starlit quadrangle, Merle nearly ran over a very small, white-headed urchin, who, on being asked what he wanted, tendered a note with—

"Oh, Mr. Kinnardson, sir—it is Mr. Kinnardson, aint it? A young woman—she gave me this, and told me to take it straight to you, she did, and not to no one else, if it were ever so."

Merle tore the paper open, and his brow darkened as he read the pencilled scrawl.

"Please come out and speak to me. I must see you at once. Am waiting at the east gate of the gardens.

"MINNIE."

His annoyance mounted at once to boiling pitch. It was past eleven; and if he were to be sent for at that time by young women, and probably kept out after hours, he should most certainly get into some awful row with the college authorities. Meetings in retired meadows were all very well; but right in the middle of the town, with the probability of David Bruce, or some one else, making a third at the conference, was quite a different matter, and not at all in his calculations. He had been so cautious hitherto; and now, by one false move, Minnie might ruin them both. For the moment he thought of staying where he was; but the idea struck him that their intimacy might have been discovered in some way, and that Minnie had stolen out to put him on his guard. The notion was not a pleasant one; but once arisen, he dared not neglect

it; and accordingly, throwing his gown round his shoulders, and putting his cap as much over his face as he could, he dismissed the little messenger with a penny, and sallied forth.

At the first sight Minnie was not apparent, either at or near the spot indicated; but as he paused in indecision near the gates, a muffled figure crossed the road from the other side of the way, and his sweetheart's voice, very low and frightened, called him by his name.

"Oh, Merle! I thought you would never come."

"What on earth do you want me for?" he asked in a whisper, angry enough to bring the tears into Minnie's eyes. "Here, don't stand talking in this blaze of moonlight. I don't want all the town to take note of us. Follow me."

And leading the way, he turned as rapidly as he could into a narrow bye-street, where only the upper windows of the tallest houses on one side of the way gleamed white in the moonbeams, and the lower storeys and opposite side of the way looked black as Erebus from contrast with the brightly lit street they had left behind.

Arrived here, Merle turned sharply round—Minnie had not ventured to speak till then—and taking her hand, asked—

"And now, what has happened? for I suppose something is amiss, or you would not have disobeyed all my wishes by sending for me in this way."

"Are you vexed, Merle? Did it matter much?" she asked, timidly.

"Only this, that it might do for me, and you too, altogether. There, don't look so frightened, child. Of course, I am not angry. Tell me what it is."

And drawing her hand through his arm, he walked on at a slow pace.

"Did you go to the willows to-day, Merle?"

"Yes, of course; and had my journey for my pains. Next time you mean to break an appointment with me, Minnie, perhaps you'll let me know beforehand, and so save my time and trouble."

"I was very sorry, Merle—so sorry; but indeed I couldn't come. That was what I sent for you to tell you about."

"Only for that! Really, Minnie, I did not think you were so imprudent. What! you would run the risk of compromising my name, not to speak" (this as an after-

thought)" of your own, just to tell me what you could as easily have written and put in the post."

"My name, Merle!" said the girl; and her voice, though trembling, had a new intonation. "You've been more than a year without thinking of that. I should have thought I could trust you to take care of it for me."

"Well—well, Minnie, don't scold me. I have taken care—a great deal of care, too—or I shouldn't have been so vexed just now. If you only do as I tell you, you've nothing to fear."

"Haven't I, Merle? Well, then, tell me what I'm to do at present. There's nothing I want but to please you. Of course, it's only right I should—now."

Merle hardly liked this conclusion. He made no answer, however; and Minnie began in an eager, agitated way to tell him about young Evans's courtship, and her father's anger.

"He spoke to me again this morning," she added; "and told me he quite trusted in my truth, and looked for me to try and like Dan'el if——"

"The butcher, you mean? For God's sake, child, don't talk as if the fellow were your intimate friend."

"I can't bear him, Merle; and though father spoke so, I saw he didn't trust me really, for he never left me alone in the shop a minute, though I were—was there as much as I could, hoping you'd look in. And then Mrs. Evans, she came; and oh, dear! she were so kind, and seemed to take it all for granted that I liked her son, as if I were keeping company with him quite regular, an' were only shy of ownin' up."

Minnie's language became more homely as she got excited, and Merle shivered involuntarily.

"And she talked Scripture to me, and told me I'd fallen on 'pastures fair' in meeting with Dan'el; and father was standing by all the while, so as I dared not say a word, scarcely."

"All the better. 'Silence is golden,' you know, Minnie. Go on."

"Ah! it don't seem much to you, Merle, because you're so sure of me." She was a little hurt at his not showing any indignant jealousy of Daniel Evans. "But it's dreadful hard on me; and when she were gone, I'd another scene with father. I told him that I wouldn't marry young Evans, an' he

told me I'd as good as said I would to Mrs. Evans; and then he suddenly turned round an' asked me where I got that little coral heart I wear round my neck o' Sundays, and when I bungled——"

"The devil! and what did you bungle for? Why not say you bought it?"

"Because lying don't come as easy as nothing to me," cried the girl, stung to momentary sharpness. "What'd you think if I lied to *you* every time you asked me a question?"

"Now, Minnie, that is different. Don't get angry, like a dear child. I only wanted to know what you did say?"

It was noticeable that every time she asserted herself in the least, his manner softened, and became deprecating. I have known some men who were always thus. The cur nature which snaps at a child, but shrinks off, tail between his legs, at the sight of a whip.

"I didn't *tell* father anything. He dragged out o' me that it had been given me," the girl whimpered—tears being the usual after-effect of anger in a woman. "But I wouldn't say by whom, though he scolded me dreadful, and kep' me in my room till Mr. Evans came in the evening."

"To make sure of you, eh?"

"Yes, and I did my best to be civil to him, Merle; for father had frightened me so by saying he'd find out who had set me again' my equals, that I wanted to quiet him any way."

"That was right, Minnie. I hope," with a little jealous laugh, "that Mr.—Mr. Evans didn't presume on your civility?"

"Oh, dear no! He seemed more frightened o' me than I o' him; but after I'd gone up to bed father called after me—'I've told Dan'el you'll spend to-morrow with his people, to get better known to his mother.'"

"The deuce he did! Your father is in a hurry to get rid of you."

"No, but he thinks I'm deceiving him, Merle—as I am, as I am!—and it's set him quite hard against me. I felt so miserable that I couldn't go to bed. I knew I must see you; an' so, when I thought he were asleep, I crep' down stairs, an' stole out. I fancied maybe you could show me what we'd better do."

"It was very imprudent of you, Minnie. Who knows but he may be looking for you now?"

"Do you think so?" and she clung to him in sudden terror. "Oh, Merle, what shall I do?"

"Don't tremble so, child. If he were, you would only find getting in again easier. You must hurry back now as quick as you can, and slip in quietly. I'll go with you to the turning. By Jove, though! we must make haste. It only wants a quarter to twelve, Minnie."

"But then, Merle—afterwards? Oh! do help me. I'm so unhappy."

"Why, Minnie, you don't want any help to keep you from giving in to an evangelical butcher," said Merle, laughing to reassure her. "You are not a baby, to be married against your will; and you would have been much wiser had you gone quietly to bed, and waited until to-morrow to make this amorous Evans understand that it was no go. Say nothing, Minnie, and hold your own. That's all I can advise you to do; and it's not difficult, is it?"

"N—no; but oh, Merle! Father has always been so good. I should dearly like to——"

"My dear girl, if we stop to talk about your likings to-night, I shall be had up before the Proctor to-morrow, as sure as a gun. You don't think of *me*, Minnie, and that I have a character in the college to lose; but you women are always so selfish."

"You should hardly call me selfish to-night," Minnie answered, indignantly. "I wouldn't ha' come out, only I thought this touched you quite as near as it did me; and I thought o' you so much that I didn't leave the house without taking your letters with me, lest father should get up, an' missing me, look among my things. See!"

And she showed a corner of the treasured packet peeping from her pocket.

"Well, you *are* a dear girl!" cried Merle, stooping to kiss the flushed cheek with real tenderness. This little mark of caution appealed more touchingly to the peculiarities of his own nature than any tears or pleading. "Here, give them to me. I was a brute to talk so. Not that I ever meant you were selfish, my darling. Indeed, no."

"But why are you taking them?" the girl asked plaintively, as his hands took prompt possession of the missives.

"To keep them out of your father's way. I know you haven't many lock-up places of your own, and suspicious people stick at nothing."

"But—oh, Merle, I want them; I like reading them so."

"You ungrammatical little woman! There, don't look miserable, and about such rubbish. You shall have them again, if you want them, when this has blown over. And now, here we are at the corner. One kiss, pet, and run as quick as you can."

She clasped her hands tighter on his arm, as though unwilling to be left; and there was a sob in her throat which Merle's kiss only partially choked. He thought she was getting hysterical, and grew uneasy.

"Why, Minnie, darling, be brave. It will all come right, you'll see. Look here, come to St. John's-gardens to-morrow. I'll be in the yew tree walk about twelve o'clock, and we'll have a chat. Don't fail, and now good night. Make haste, little one."

And without waiting for an answer, he detached her hands from his arm, gave them a gentle squeeze in his own, and tore off in the direction of Magdalen, reaching that venerable pile, in company with sundry other late Oxonians, just as Big Ben was tolling out the first stroke of twelve.

He had only been three-quarters of an hour absent, after all. But "*il y a des mauvais quart d'heures.*" Merle had no desire to return to the supper party; and if he had it would have been vain, for Jack, (in the cause of training) had already turned his guests out, and Merle went straight to his own room.

What a relief it was to shut and fasten both doors against the possibility of intrusion! God knows he had sufficient food for reflection in finding an answer to one question—

What was he to do about Minnie Bruce?

It was plain to him now, stave it off as he might, that she considered herself as engaged to him quite as seriously as though she were his equal, and considered him as bound to protect her from the persecutions of other lovers, and her father's anger. Mr. Evans's courtship had made that apparent; and, unless Minnie were exceptionally lucky and prudent, which his sinking heart did not foretell, had brought matters to a crisis: the very thing of all others which Merle was anxious to avoid. Indeed, the mere idea of having to settle a question which brought him, the ultra-refined poet and gentleman, into rivalry with a vulgar, greasy butcher, was so repellent to all his notions of congruity, that

his ruling idea when he entered college was the determination to break off this connection at once, mingled with a good deal of anger at himself for not having done it that evening.

And yet, how to set about it? That was the question.

It had gone on now so long—beginning at the end of his freshman's year, renewed with more warmth and "intention," as the French say, with Minnie growing more docile and loving day by day as he grew more authoritative and more tenacious of his proprietorship—that the task of explaining to her that the whole affair was nothing but a flirtation on his part, sure to be broken off sooner or later, and binding on neither in any wise, was by no means so easy a matter as some men better versed in such matters might have imagined. Even to look it boldly in the face was more than Merle's nerves were equal to. The perspiration came out on his brow; and with a muttered oath at his own miserable weakness, he went to the sideboard, and pouring himself out a wine glassful of brandy, tossed half of it off at a gulp.

That served his purpose—strung him up, as it were; and he began to pace up and down the room, thinking it out, or rather in. For the more he thought the deeper he seemed to get in the tangle, and the harder it became to see a way out which should at all coincide with either duty or inclination. He was fond of the girl. Even looking on her as a rosy-lipped, round-faced plaything, and nothing more, he admitted that; but in the last few weeks Minnie's character seemed to have been changing—or rather expanding, and gaining force and colour in a manner which made it at once more difficult to part from, and more dangerous to play with her. Nay, in their last two interviews she had shown several flashes of passion, giving him glimpses of an intensity of feeling which he had hardly expected in the bright-eyed, simple-minded little girl; even though he had been educating her for such a result by a steady course of mental stimulants and nervous excitements, in the shape of passionate poetry and his own capricious tenderness, which, now warm and caressing, now irritable and captious, was about the worst treatment for an undisciplined, motherless girl, with warm affections and little knowledge of the world, that any one could have found for

her. "As we reap, so we sow." And now, in the fulness of time, this young gardener was reaping even as he had sown, full measure and pressed down; and finding out, as those will who buy their seed at the devil's shop, that there is no crop like that gentleman's for strength and luxuriance.

What *should* he do?

Marry her? That was out of the question altogether. Even had she been a lady, the idea of marriage with a penniless girl was quite untenable by a young man only in his second year at college, and with nothing but the remote prospect of some poorly paid curacy in the future. Even David Bruce would hardly have consented to give his daughter to the starvation which marrying a man in Merle's position implied; and, therefore, without going into the subject of her inferiority of birth—a drawback which, to a nature like Merle's, was more insurmountable than to many men wealthier and even higher in the social scale—marriage was not even to be considered in the list of his difficulties. Thank God!—as he muttered with a sigh of relief for the one blessing which prudence more than principle had reserved for him—he had done nothing which need bring the thought of such a fatality as that before the most straightlaced of his compeers.

The option lay, then, between breaking off altogether, or carrying on indefinitely a flirtation—he never called it by a worse name—which was already beginning to tax his caution and patience beyond what was agreeable, and which might at any moment spring a mine which would utterly annihilate all his University prospects. Too great a risk that, altogether; and, besides, he doubted much whether Minnie would any longer consent to carry on her part in the—by courtesy—flirtation. She was evidently taking things au sérieux; and once a woman does that, and wakes up to the earnest of life, it is no use trying to return to the pleasant, lotus-eating day-dream which has proved so successful a mirage hitherto. Knowing her whole nature as he did—and Merle was a quick reader of character—he felt morally convinced that it would be vain attempting to keep matters on the old footing. The crisis had come, and with a girl of Minnie's temperament would never blow over without some change in their present position towards one another.

Must he then give her up?

Like a picture, sensuous and warmly coloured as by some French master, there rose before him the glowing cheeks, and rich, bright wave of auburn curls; the round, trim figure, panting and trembling to his every word; the sweet forget-me-not eyes, brilliant with undeveloped passion; the full scarlet lips, and warm, clinging hands. He heard the liquid, childish voice prattling the litany of love, which only he had taught it. He felt, as if his hand were resting there, the rapid beating of the tender but all-ungoverned little heart, which had fallen so easy a conquest to his fascinations. Golden sunlight streamed upon face and figure. Faint, sweet odours of wild rose and honeysuckle gathered during their stolen rambles, filled the air; and with a despairing feeling that it was impossible to relinquish all this at once and for ever, to live in the same town for another year—perhaps two, who knew?—and shut his lips and his hands against even a taste of that cup from which he was now at liberty to drink his fill, Merle threw himself into a chair, and laying his head on the table, groaned aloud. It could not—could not be.

Even with the thought came a subtle whisper, "Why should it?" and pushing back the damp hair from his brow, he sat up like a man reprieved for a minute from the gallows, and stared with wild, stupid fierceness at a pile of books which lay on the corner of a shelf hard by, which bore the world-known titles of Paul de Kock, Rousseau, Goethe, and Comte. He had studied deeply enough before now in that accursed school of enervated morals and false sentiment; and whether he boldly put aside the "lilies and languors of virtue for the roses and raptures of vice," by using his influence over Minnie for the plain, coarse purpose of corruption; or availed himself of the specious delusions and ingenious sophisms of Goethe and Comte, to mystify her with a farrago of Platonism and sentimental soul-affinities, it came to one and the same thing in the end. Minnie might stay single, or even marry if she willed—she would still remain his—his to amuse and enjoy himself with while he remained at Oxford—his to cast away when he was tired of her. David Bruce need never hear his name. He (Merle) had got his letters, and for her own sake Minnie would be cautious and careful enough then. Imprudence is the prerogative of innocence. That

grace lost, he would not find her inclined to dispute over every white lie; and loving him as fondly as he knew she did, he would only have to convince her of the utter impossibility of marriage, and the alternative between entire separation or something easier, sweeter, and which (according to the Frenchman and the German) might be made to look rather virtuous than otherwise, to use a little tender persuasion, some of those specious arguments Satan had supplied, and Minnie must—

What was that?

Only an open letter which, in his restless movements, he had knocked off the table, and which had rustled on to the floor. He picked it up, and his eye fell on this passage.

"Of course, I do not know, Merle, dear, whether Jack be working or not. He never talks of his good deeds; but I do know that he must be greatly wrapped up in the great race, and we fear the books are being neglected. Now, will you help me by bringing them before his mind every now and then? Don't tell me that you are younger than he, and that it isn't your place to preach. If Jack were stepping into a ditch, you wouldn't wait to think whether it was your place to pluck him back, would you? And remember, he has not your talents or your love of study to keep him out of idleness; so, being stronger in yourself, you are bound to give him an aiding hand. I do pray he may pass, not only because failure would be such a terrible grief to papa, or from worldly reasons—which don't weigh, as Jack is not going into a profession—but because it is his duty. He was sent to Oxford for that, and he gave his word to papa that he would achieve it; and I know my brother so well that I feel sure not even the pleasure of Oxford winning at Putney would compensate for the pain of his own failure, after both were over. However great the present enjoyment, it can only last a little while; but the sting of self-reproach will sometimes rankle through a whole life. Dear old Jack! I wish he would think of that now; and Merle, you who are going to be one of Christ's own disciples—you who have so often discussed with me the many little paths leading from the right, and which Jack, keeping his eyes only on the end, does not stoop to see—how much you might help

him, not only by example (that is of course), but—"

He read no more. The letter dropped from his hands, and his eyes were hidden behind them. This was how Enid, his pure, high-principled cousin, wrote to him. This was her picture of his life; and he—good God! what would she think were she to see him now? The red blood rushed into his face as he pictured her utter contempt and abhorrence for the man who could sit there calmly meditating how to ruin an innocent girl with least danger to himself—and all for a little enjoyment, which, as she said, could only last so brief a time, and must leave a sting behind to poison his whole life.

It is wonderful on what small hinges great events turn. Enid's letter—the clear handwriting and earnest words of the only woman he had ever truly loved or revered—drove out the foul temptations of Satan as with the sword of an archangel. Come what might, he could not put his hand in Enid's clean white palm, or look in her clear, grave, honest eyes, and know himself the heartless seducer he had dreamt awhile ago of becoming. No, hard as it might be, and heartless as was the part which at best seemed left for him to play, that worst evil he could avoid.

Minnie and he must part, and without further delay.

He was still "small" enough to feel thankful that his letters were safe in his own possession. That would make things much more safe; and before he went to bed, he was busy conjuring up a picture of Minnie consoled with Daniel Evans, and himself going home free from all blame and suspicion.

Somehow, Merle had forgotten that indignant note written earlier in the evening, and which Minnie would not receive till the morning post.

SCENTED WITH LAVENDER.

OUR CHILDREN.

HOW one misses children! One of my school-boy brothers came up to town awhile ago for his holidays; and for a few weeks my sofa ceased to be the quiet haven of dreaming solitary hours. The dull parlour rang with bursts of boyish laughter. Two sturdy young legs cut wonderful

capers, and turned more wonderful summersaults over the well-worn carpet. The tiny table at my side, usually sacred to my books and writing materials, became a perfect Golgotha of gaily bound prize books, balls of twine, limp gingerbread nuts, saucers of paste, and weak and gummy cardboard erections, supposed to represent St. Paul's or the hull of the ill-fated *Cap-tain*, and resembling nothing but a heap of damp and decaying linen; besides a host of minor articles too numerous to name.

During these few weeks too my sofa was constantly vibrating to the drumming of a pair of stoutly-shod feet, my nerves quivering to the sound of unwonted crashes or heavy falls, intimating that the young gentleman was either succeeding in breaking something or trying to break himself; and my head frequently aching with the strains of "four-and-twenty brisk young fellows" or the "Laird o' Cockpen" alternately whistled and shouted in the treble octaves of a decidedly more powerful than strictly musical young voice; and with all this I was happier than I had been for many a long month before.

There is something so cheerful and inspiriting in the presence of children. Their young heads propound such wonderful questions to be solved by yours, and their bright eyes await the answer with such unhesitating faith, that you feel put on your mettle, and strive to shake yourself out of your usual mental indolence, that you may appear to better advantage while in the neighbourhood of these thirsty young souls, who always seem ready to gauge and expose your ignorance at a moment's notice. It is all very well to be the owner of a fine garden; but if one neglects it entirely and pays no heed to planting or pruning, it is not pleasant to have it ruthlessly invaded by a band of eager young florists, who march in hoping for bright flowers and luscious fruits, and return empty-handed or laden with weeds. Under such circumstances one is apt to rise in the night, go into one's neglected territory with watering-pot and spade, and set to work to improve the ground a little—as I did when I undertook to teach a small brother of mine arithmetic, and found that I had to begin by teaching myself; that the superficial, lady-like knowledge sufficient for daily use was utterly inadequate to explaining anything beyond the A B C of arithmetic, or working out the simplest mental problem with an intelligent

child of nine years old, whose first question was likely to be, "*Why* must I do so and so?"

Writing of the early days of his Indian mission, Bishop Heber said, "I was horrified in the first place by my people's ignorance, and confounded in the second by my own." It is supremely so with children; and for that fact alone I think their companionship a special boon and benefit to those who, leading a lonely or sedentary life, are apt to let their minds grow rusty and their education run to seed for the want of a little timely polish and care.

And then the intense spring and vitality in these little people! Does it not seem to put a new element of life into ourselves; to act like a shower of rain on the dried twigs of our existence, and freshen them up into a green and healthy plant? Does not the very sunshine seem brighter when it glitters among the golden curls of a little child at play? Don't we appreciate the blue sky more when we see it reflected in a pair of laughing baby eyes? Have not the creases in life grown wonderfully smooth when a wee, dimpled creature has learnt to nestle lovingly down in our arms, and all other squabbles and worries and disturbances must cease because "Baby's asleep." Aye, and must not be disturbed either, if we would not likewise awaken a roar lusty enough to deaden every other sound within the radius of a hundred yards.

By the way, what a wonderful comfort it seems to be to a child to emit those said astounding noises. They are not particularly pleasant to the hearers; but, considering the very small cause, or no cause at all, from which they proceed, not to speak of the swollen, purple, and crimson condition to which they not unfrequently reduce the young performers, the gratification derived from them must be sufficiently great to make that person an arrant self-worshipper who, to save his own ears, would silence them at once and for ever.

I remember on one occasion deriving much pleasure from one of them myself. I had been romping or fighting, the latter probably—for I was a pugnacious child—with a small brother and sister on the top of a bank, when in the struggle I lost my footing, was pushed over it, and came down in a heap on the flower-bed below. My juvenile enemies fled, and I picked myself up. I was not a bit hurt, hardly shaken;

and was a great deal more conscious of the double fact of a fine heart's-ease crushed under my plump person, and an approaching governess, than of any pain whatsoever; wherefore I was on the point of sneaking quietly away like the culprit I was, when, glancing downwards at my person, I became aware that a very small piece of skin was missing from my left knee, and a still smaller drop of blood issuing from the wound. This was quite enough. I became instantly impressed with the delightful sense that I *was* hurt, and that, instead of being in fault, I was a terribly injured and much-to-be-pitied individual: an opinion upon which I immediately acted by re-subsiding on the bed of heart's-ease, and giving vent to such an appalling roar that not only was punishment an unthought-of thing, but my unhappy brother and sister, impressed with the idea that they had killed me, took refuge in a musty boot closet, and were not disinterrred therefrom for many hours: a time they probably spent in the most abject terror and remorse.

Talking of this, I wonder if the greatest hypochondriac, the most blood-stained criminal, ever suffers one tithe of the fear and misery undergone for days and weeks together by many a rosy-faced, innocent child of eight or nine years old; periods of suffering all the more intense that they are concealed with a persistent fortitude which would have done credit to Foxe's martyrs.

Why, in our childish days we had a nurse; a kindly old Scotchwoman, possessed of an interminable fund of stories relating to the arch enemy of mankind; who, she was firmly persuaded (and as firmly persuaded us), had been residing visibly and bodily in Edinburgh during the latter part of the last century.

These anecdotes she was in the habit of retailing to us whilst putting us to bed, and no one who has not experienced the sensation can imagine the amount of mental anguish I endured during and after these recitals. I have little doubt now but that my brothers and sisters were similarly affected; but one and all of us would rather have died a hundred deaths than have confessed our cowardice to one another; so we nightly underwent the same penance, and when nurse used to say in answer to the petition for a "story"—

"Oh lor! yes, deary. I knows a story as is powerfu' interestin', an' gospel true;

but it's a wee bit uncanny, ye ken, and nae-body who is 'frighted need listen," we all stanchly asserted ourselves strangers to the very name of fear. I am afraid, however, that my pale face and nervous starts told another tale; for nurse frequently singled me out with—

"Now, Miss Ruthie, gin you're feared, say the word, an' I'll put ye to bed afore I begin."

Of course Miss Ruth did not "say the word," and the nights of horror she underwent in consequence were almost enough to turn an older head grey.

Very little do many, of even the most tender parents, know of the inner life led by the children they idolize. If they did, more than one nurse and governess, who are now spoken of as "that dear old Robins! such a treasure in the nursery, quite adored by the children," or "that good Miss Jones, the best teacher we ever had, so superior, never wanted to go out, and quite changed Tommy from a noisy, troublesome boy to the gentlest child you ever saw," would have been put outside the house at a day's notice, and with such a character as would not have aided in smoothing their entrance into another family.

Perhaps things are better as they are. To the best of my belief, neither Robins nor Miss Jones would have opened their lips if they had guessed one quarter of the suffering they inflicted on the little minds in their care. Robins pours out her lengthy ghost stories to little Mary out of sheer thoughtless garrulity, and a wish to amuse the child. Miss Jones threatens naughty Tommy with the Evil One who goeth about "seeking whom he may devour," and then locks up the sinner in a dark closet to repent. Mary and Tommy suffer an anguish of terror and pain, it is true; but nurse and governess know nothing of it, and are hardly responsible for the infliction. Besides, there are some children who are unfortunately gifted with such intensely nervous, imaginative natures that they are able to make a little Purgatory for themselves out of the most peaceful Heaven their friends can make for them. I fear I was one of those children, for I know I suffered intensely from fears which were of no living being's creation but my own; and which would have been perfectly ludicrous, had not so much pathos mingled

with the absurdity. One of them I know related to a certain convict, whom, for the nonce, I choose to call Mr. Christy. We passed our childhood in one of the smallest and most remote of her Majesty's colonies, a mere speck on the Southern Ocean; and in this lonely spot the keeper of a small and somewhat disreputable public-house took it into his head one night to batter his wife to death, which he accordingly did. He was tried for the crime and was duly sentenced to seven years' transportation with hard labour; a sentence which could not be carried out until the arrival of a man-of-war which could convey the convict to his destination; Mr. Christy in the meanwhile being imprisoned in the colony gaol, and set to work in chains on a peat bog not far from our house.

Now, my father had been one of the magistrates on the trial; and happening to overhear some of our servants talking the case over, I gathered that Mr. Christy had threatened to "be even wid de masther wan o' these days. Blood was thicker than wather; an' ef he didn't git free to pay the debt hisself, there were many o' his familiee 'ould settlle it for him." Well, this speech, the very vagueness of which increased its horror for a child, weighed on my mind till it became a perfect nightmare; and never a day passed without my expecting to hear that Christy had cut his way out of the slight, wooden erection, dignified by the name of a prison, and had murdered my father. If papa was out late in the evening, I suffered agonies lest he might be waylaid on his homeward route; and even when we were all seated round the blazing fire at night, chatting and talking, I kept a constant watch on the door and window, lest I might see the shadow of the murderer on the blind, or his ungainly figure lurking in the dark passage. I even fancied that Christy himself was aware of my knowledge of his intentions; and if, in the course of our walks, we passed him at his lonely labour, I would avert my eyes in nervous dread of seeing the gleam of malicious triumph I fancied sparkling in his. I never told my father of my fear, never breathed it to any one, much as the doing so would have relieved me; but the impression must have been very deep, for nearly ten years later I, a grown-up young lady, was seated in our South American drawing-room when the maid came in saying—

"An Englishman wanted to speak with the Señor. Could he see me as the Señor was out?"

Of course I said "Yes."

My father at that time held a high position under Government, and I imagined that the man was probably some deserter from the fleet, or distressed emigrant seeking assistance; judge then my feelings when the door opened to admit—Mr. Christy! It was years since I had seen him. He had grown stouter and more florid, and the prison garb of grey and yellow was exchanged for a suit of sober black; but I knew him in a moment, and in that moment all the old horror, the realization of that childish nightmare, rushed back on me so keenly that, with a barely smothered cry of terror, I actually turned and fled! What the man thought, Heaven only knows. Probably, that I was mad. It was not likely that he recognized the little child who used to pass him so shrinkingly years ago in that far distant island. Possibly, his errand was as I imagined, and he did not even know who my father was, apart from his official capacity. I never solved the mystery. The maid got rid of him with a civil message, and I never saw him again. I trust I never shall.

I dare say some one is saying by this time, "How uncommonly learned about children this old maid is! She must be very fond of them." Yes, my friend, I am very fond of children, and of babies in particular. Most literally to me come the words "of such is the kingdom of Heaven;" and in this workaday world it is folly to throw away such tiny glimpses of Heaven's sunlight as come across the grey monotony of an invalid's daily life. Besides, every woman with an ounce of womanliness about her must have something to pet—a husband, a child of her own, a female friend, a cat, a monkey, a bird, or even a flower. Now, I don't believe in female friendships except in very rare cases. Flowers are not given to flourishing in London, and birds are apt to die or get killed in some unpleasant way just as one grows fond of them. Of cats I have a special and utter detestation; and as for monkeys! . . . please don't mention them.

Not feeling inclined, then, to pet any of the above-named articles, and being deprived by my premature old maidenhood of the blessing of a husband or bairn of my

own, I am constrained to take the entire genius Baby under my protection, and pet and care for them whenever and wherever I may happen to come across those dimpled pocket editions of humanity.

After all, it is not a bad school for a woman. We cannot all be wives and mothers; but there is many and many a hapless little orphan whose life might have been smooth and sunny, many a tiny grave which never need have been dug in the green turf, if the sacred instinct of motherhood were more cultivated among the maiden aunts and lonely spinsters who abound on every side.

There are many mothers of large families who neither nourish, teach, nor look after their children; who, beyond the mere fact of bringing them into the world, seem to have less care for their life therein than the meanest of the hired servants who attend to their childish wants; mothers who lead lives dedicated to society, literature, selfish pleasure—ay, even *charity*, without giving more than a cursory thought, a careless order every now and then to the little creatures which God has given them to be trained and cared for as His pet lambs, to be educated for loving wives and faithful husbands, and to bless the declining years of their parents' lives with answering love and devotion.

Can we wonder when such parents complain of the bitter disappointment their children are to them? Disappointment! Why, in God's name, what do you expect, you fathers and mothers, who neither trouble yourself to correct your children's bad, nor foster their good passions; who actually lend the first hand towards destroying their baptismal purity by giving a free rein in their presence to your evil tempers, your love of scandal, your lightness of speech; who neither sympathize with their troubles, nor accustom them to feel for yours; who lead your selfish, self-indulgent lives apart from your children's hearts and interests, and then—raise a great outcry because these very sons and daughters grow up selfish and heartless likewise; frivolous girls, libertine sons, whose god is the desire of the moment, whose heaven the gratification of their earthly passions?

Better and nobler and greater a thousand times the little, hardworked, overtired sister in a London *crèche* than the fashionable mother of a dozen handsome, spoilt, neglected children.

Besides, what a fund of amusement there is in the little people if we only look for it! What wonderful ideas, quaint delusions, and comical conceits they have of their own! and how little we know about them when we come to consider the matter! Many grown-up men and women have laughed and cried over "Tom Brown's School Days," "Alone in London," "Misunderstood," and other children's stories, bearing on their face the impress of being drawn from life; and yet these very people may have children or nephews and nieces of their own, living books of whose contents they know nothing beyond the mere lettering of the title-page.

Have you ever read De Quincey's autobiography? and, if so, did you not thoroughly enjoy the record of his childish days, of the imaginary kingdoms (I forget their names now) over which he and his brother reigned, of the trouble his kingdom gave him, of the anxiety he used to suffer about his subjects; and the real sorrow of heart and indignation he underwent when his brother insisted that, as the territories adjoined and the future opium-eater was not so able a monarch as himself, the former's kingdom should be made to pay tribute and be subject to his own. Poor little De Quincey! One feels sorry for the afterwards world-famed essayist when one reads of his childish grief, his tears and perplexity respecting this purely aerial royalty. Yet in our own lives we had equally imaginary secrets which caused us as much thought, and even more delight and amusement than De Quincey's kingdom gave him.

How utterly absurd it seems now to look back on our childish fancies so long passed away into oblivion! Nay, not oblivion; for am I not recalling them now, and laughing to myself at the quaintly merry conceits?

"Visions of childhood! Stay, oh! stay!

Ye were so sweet and mild!
And distant voices seem to say,
'It cannot be! They pass away!
Other themes demand thy lay;
Thou art no more a child.'"

But ah! it is the memory of those visions which makes me gentle with children's freaks and fancies nowadays; for were not ours as nonsensical as they were possible to be, and yet productive of a wonderful amount of pleasure? Where is the good in destroying infantine delusions, and stamping down

whimsical air castles with the stern foot of middle-aged common-sense, when the doing so is no benefit to ourselves, and inflicts real pain and loss on the roughly awakened little dreamers?

I do love to see children happy; and as "where ignorance is bliss 'tis folly to be wise," I would leave the little people to that bliss which, as L. E. L. says, "life never knows again." One cannot be a child long. Strive as one may, the charmed dream is but too soon over; wherefore let it be made as happy as it may. Don't frown at Dick because he comes tumbling into the room, dancing and singing like a wild creature. Don't put Susie down when she says silly, childish things. Don't snub Harry with "never mind—don't tease me" when he asks a question; or that worst of aggravating answers to a child, "Oh! you couldn't understand if I did tell you." Don't slap Baby's meddling little fingers if they chance to tear your lace or crumple your collars. Don't in fact fret and fume because a lively, healthy, intelligent child won't move as slowly, sit as still, and keep as quiet as a weary, middle-aged person in delicate health. There may come a day—God avert it from you—when you will listen vainly for the bounding step and boisterous laugh; when you will strain your eyes to see the merry smile and saucy glance which you rebuked before; when the little, restless body will lie still enough, never to move or rise again until the sounding of the great trump.

Even putting death aside, we lose our children soon enough. They go to school, or they grow up and there is an end of them, their racket, their nonsense, their innocent fun, and short-lived sadness.

"We see the nursery windows
Wide open to the air;
But the faces of the children
They are no longer there.
They walk not under the lindens,
They play not in the hall;
But shadow and silence and sadness
Are hanging over all.
The birds sing in the branches
With sweet, familiar tone;
But the voices of the children
Will be heard in dreams alone."

"In dreams alone!" Longfellow must pardon me for altering the tense in those well-loved lines of his, for I am feeling the truth of them very keenly to-day. Even my school-boy brother has gone away now. The little table at my side is neat and tidy again.

The house is very quiet. There is no noise of echoing laughter, no disturbance of restless feet; and I, lying at peace on my sofa, think of the boy's bright face, till it brings with it a host of others, bright and beaming with the cloudless sunshine of eternal childhood. Little hands clasp mine, little heads nestle on my breast, little feet patter round my sofa. There is a buzz of childish voices in the air, and then it dies away, drowned in the clamour of a street organ at the corner, and I open my eyes and turn fretfully from the noise. Quiet is very comfortable, after all; and where children are, quietness is not.

THE PLANETARY ENGINE.

MY late friend, Dr. Jacobs, was a striking example of that narrow gulf which is said to lie between genius and insanity. If there is a bridge across this gulf, he might be said to stand in the middle of it. In his youth he met with a great misfortune, which was said to have made him a little crazed. When he went to Cambridge, he was one of the most promising students that ever entered. He worked hard, and was expected by his college and tutors to be one of the best senior wranglers who had ever headed the tripos. Just before the examination, however, his health broke down, and he was unable to go in. When he recovered, his mind regained its former activity, except on the one subject, science, regarding which he had some very odd ideas. On all other points he was remarkably acute; he was a pleasant and good-tempered friend, and was much liked in his native town, to which, as he possessed some property, he retired to devote himself to his great scientific discoveries. Knowing, as his friends did, that he was one of the best living mathematicians, there was always an interest connected with his investigations, and some of his admirers did not hesitate to assert that the "philosopher" would some day stumble on something that would gain him a name in science. His greatest hobby, and the one I wish to tell of here, was the Planetary Engine. After working a great many years on the subject, he had a lecture in the town hall to explain it. The Engine was placed on the platform, and was shaped like an ordinary balloon. The car was of the same construction; but the upper part, instead of being filled with

gas, was solid and of considerable weight. I shall quote from memory the beginning of the lecture.

"This Engine is intended for visiting the various planets and fixed stars. I have found the centre of gravity of the machine, which is easily done by the principles of mechanics; the problem, therefore, is to avert the force of the earth's gravitation from this point, and bring to bear on it instead, the attraction of that planet which I wish to visit. When I have made this discovery, which I have many hopes of doing, I shall be able in a few hours to reach the most distant point of our planetary system. But lest you may think that the Engine would be dashed to pieces by the momentum it has gained before I reach the planet, the gravitation of this world will be allowed to resume its force, which will counteract the great motion, and I shall descend slowly to the ground."

Not one of his audience understood the remainder of his lecture, as it was altogether taken up with the most intricate calculations, which I have no doubt were quite correct, supposing the philosophers to have solved the original problem. At the close, two-thirds of his hearers left thinking he was a very great man. The remainder, I am afraid, thought he was a very crazed one. Some months after this, I was told by an acquaintance that Jacobs had at last made his great discovery. I confess I was a little startled when I heard this. The recent discoveries of science, the philosopher's undoubted ability, and the fact that he had never formerly announced any discovery nor made any actual professions which he did not fulfil, all served to stagger me. A little reflection, however, convinced me of the absurdity of the thing.

It was announced that the philosopher would make his first voyage in a few days. I was very much alarmed when I heard that Jacobs had arranged that the Engine should be taken to the top of some very high scaffolding connected with a public building in course of erection; and that, when he had taken his seat in the car, it should be pushed off. I went and remonstrated with him, and said that the Engine would rise equally well from the ground. But it was in vain. He assured me that the dust or damp that might be on the ground would alter the centre of gravity, and that this would upset all his calculations. I

reasoned with him for a long time; but it was to no purpose. He said his Planetary Engine must be pushed off from some height, and offered to show me calculations which would prove the evil effects the ground would have; in fact, that so delicate was the apparatus, it would not rise from the surface of the earth at all.

After leaving him, I went to the young architect who had charge of the building from which Jacobs was going to commit suicide. To my astonishment, I found that he had assented to all the philosopher's plans.

"Why, if he is wrong, the sooner he finds it out the better," was the answer I got to my remonstrances. "Besides," he continued, "who knows but he may rise, after all? Dr. Jacobs is such a very clever man, I should not be surprised if he did."

I thought I had done all that I could, and hoped that Dr. Jacobs would alter his mind before the day arrived on which his experiment was to take place. He did not, however; and on going to the place at the hour he had fixed, I found an immense crowd assembled to witness the ascent of the Engine. The credulity of the greater part of these people was astonishing.

"You'll see the philosopher go up like a sky-rocket," I heard a mechanic say to his companion.

"This discovery brings honour to this town," remarked a very respectable tradesman.

"Did you hear which of the stars he's going to?" asked a female of some of the spectators.

What made me wonder most was that not one appeared to have a sense of the danger to which Jacobs was exposing himself. If there were any who understood that he would certainly be dashed to pieces, they were not, as far as I saw, among the crowd. At last the Planetary Engine arrived, and was partly carried and partly pulled by ropes to the top of the scaffolding. The doctor made his appearance, and was greeted with loud shouts by the crowd. A good deal of bantering, as was natural, took place.

"Don't lose the way coming home."

"Bring back one of the inhabitants," &c.

The doctor entered the car, and the machine was brought to the very edge of the scaffold. When it was about to be pushed off I closed my eyes. A moment afterwards I heard a loud crash: the machine

was dashed to pieces. This was followed by great cheering on the part of the crowd. I opened my eyes. The people were shouting and looking upwards. Could it be that the philosopher was actually ascending? I looked up, and there he was indeed in mid-air, but suspended by a rope which was fastened round his waist. He was hanging a few feet from the place from which he had been pushed off, and was at once dragged up. A rope had been slipped round him unobserved, by the men who had assisted him with his Engine, and who had never intended that he should run the risk of killing himself. When I saw him shortly afterwards, I censured him very strongly for his foolishness in risking his life. He was unconvinced, however.

"Of course," he said, "I know it was for what they thought my good that they put that rope round me, but it completely disturbed the centre of gravity. Had they left me to myself, I should now be in Saturn."

The Planetary Engine, to my joy, was smashed to pieces, and he never attempted to make another, but spent the remainder of his life in the eager but vain pursuit after more harmless discoveries.

OUR DAUGHTER PATTY.

CHAPTER I.

PATTY was not our only child—there was Elizabeth; she was a good deal older than Patty. Let me see—there was seven years between them, I think—yes, Elizabeth and Bob Brown were of an age, and Bob was just seven-and-twenty.

I can remember, as if it was yesterday, when I come to think, how Jane Brown used to set up her Bob against my Elizabeth. Of course Bob's an exception, but I must say, as a rule, I don't like to see such very fat babies; they never turn out so healthy, to my mind. At all events, even if Elizabeth was not so lusty as Bob, I'm sure Patty was a finer child, and Mrs. Brown herself admits she wouldn't wish to see a stouter, bonnier babe than my Patty was at six months.

How surprised they all were. Why, Mrs. Taylor wouldn't believe it, and said father was joking when he told her what a rare Christmas-box he'd had. Jane Brown and the Hollands came round after church, and said they'd come to make sure, not being able

to credit their ears. Father made them stay, I recollect, and drink my health and baby's in a bottle of that wine he got from Smith's sale. I heard them laughing and talking in the little parlour at the back of the shop quite plainly; and father was that merry, he might have been six-and-twenty instead of six-and-forty. Dear, dear! it seems but the other day, instead of twenty years and more ago.

Patty must have been about sixteen (for I remember she'd just gone into bonnets for Sundays) at the time father and I retired. You see, we'd no sons to leave the business to. Father was getting on in years, and being pretty well to do (for stationery's a paying trade when one knows how to work it), we sold up the stock and goodwill, and settled down quietly in Nelson-street.

It wanted about three weeks to Patty's twentieth birthday—I know this because it was just a year since Bob Brown came home and set up in business for himself, and Mrs. Brown had just been in talking to me about it. Elizabeth was helping me stone raisins for the pudding, for I always make mine two or three weeks before it's wanted, and have done ever since I kept house. Father was looking over the paper and smoking his pipe: that was the one thing my husband and me ever had words about, that everlasting smoking. There wasn't a place in the house free from the smell of it, except, perhaps, the front parlour. I was determined no pipes should come there; let them do what they liked with the rest, that one room should be kept genteel. Well, I was just thinking of calling Patty to come and do her share of the raisins, when she came running into the room.

Father looked up and said—

"What's the row now, Patty?"

I said—

"Get a knife, love, and come and help us."

Elizabeth said—

"Goodness, Patty, do try if you can be a little less boisterous; and shut the door after you, do."

But Patty heard none of us.

"Look here, Lizzie," she cried; "here's a note for you. Mrs. Brown's Mary's just left it. I'm sure it's to ask us there. It just looks like an invitation. Oh, do be quick and open it. Or let me, your fingers are so sticky."

And she tore off the envelope. Patty

always was just like that, so quick and impulsive; and although I shouldn't be the one to say it, perhaps I don't think you'd meet a livelier — no, nor a prettier girl either—than our Patty in a day's walk. Father used to say she was like me in the days when he first knew me, but that was just like his nonsense.

"Well, I'm sure—I think you might let me open my own letters," said Elizabeth.

"Oh, it is! What fun! Emmy says they're going to dance, too. Do you think they'll take up the carpet, ma?" cried Patty.

"Now, how can I tell, Patty?" said I. "I've heard it said by some that it does a carpet no harm to dance upon it, though I must say I shouldn't like to see a lot of folks tramping about on my best Brussels."

"When is it to be, Patty? Come here and tell me all about it," said father.

"Is it to be full dress, should you think?" asked Elizabeth; and I could see quite well that she liked the notion of a little outing almost as well as her sister.

"It's next Wednesday, four days off. How I wish it was to-morrow."

"For shame, Patty! to-morrow's Sunday," said Elizabeth.

Father laughed and said—

"How fond these young people are of kicking up their heels a bit. Well, well, I suppose our day's over. I can remember, though, when we could caper about with the best of 'em. Eh, mother?"

"You old darling! I wish you were going with us," cried Patty, kissing him.

"I wonder," said I, "if Mrs. Brown'll wear her puce satin. She had it done up fresh last winter for the Hollands', and it looked almost as good as new again."

And I began telling the girls of the first time ever Mrs. Brown put on that gown—it was at Emmy's christening; and of how she must have had that dress seventeen years at the very least, for she got it at the same time as I bought my liver-coloured silk, and that was done for, as they knew, more than a year ago.

But Patty was too excited to listen to anything.

"I wonder who'll be there? Do you think they'll ask the Greens? The Hollands are sure to be invited, I should think. I say, Lizzie, what'll you wear?"

It was rather rude of Patty to interrupt me; but I never minded Patty much, she

had such pretty ways with her. One couldn't be vexed with her long ever, somehow. I insisted, though, that she should put on her print apron, and come to the raisins.

Said Elizabeth—

"I'm not sure yet whether I shall be able to go at all."

"Lor! why not?" cried Patty.

"Never mind, Patty, Liz is only trying to frighten you a bit. Aint you now, Liz?" said father.

"Mrs. Brown'll be very much put about if you don't go, after her preparing the supper and all," said I; and I knew she would, too; there's nothing so aggravating as to reckon on folks and get ready for them, and then for them not to come.

"Well, you see, Wednesday's church night, and I don't know that I should like to miss it after Mr. Canter asking us so nicely to come."

"I like that. What do you call a nice way, Lizzie? Look here, father, he entreated us last Sunday to come on Wednesday evenings, that 'the church mightn't be empty.' That was a funny reason to give from the pulpit, wasn't it now?"

"Patty, Patty," I said, "how can you let your tongue run so fast?"

"Well, but ma, we did go, you know, last Wednesday—Lizzie persuaded me, so I went to help fill up the church; and oh! how I wished I could divide myself into a hundred, to people some of those empty pews. Why, pa, there was only me and Liz and two old women. I know they were thinking of coats and flannel petticoats, and not of Canter the eloquent, or even the empty church—oh! and I forgot there was one old man who fell fast asleep, and had to be waked up when it was time to go home; and three children who wandered in by mistake, and amused themselves by climbing up into the seats, and then slipping off them again with a great bang, till they had to be turned out."

I should have reproved Patty, for I can't abide such things being made a jest of; but father was laughing, and said—

"Well done, little Patty; and what did Canter say to his scanty flock?"

Elizabeth made the remark—

"I suppose, then, Bob Brown and those girls in the choir count for nothing?"

I could see, by the way she said it, that Elizabeth was getting vexed, but Patty would go on.

"Well, there's something wrong somewhere or other. Either there should be no service on Wednesday evenings, or else the parsons should make it attractive enough to get folks to come. It's a perfect farce to light up a church and preach for half an hour to Liz and me and Bob Brown."

Father was evidently enjoying it all.

"I find, mostly," said he, "two sermons a Sabbath quite enough for my digestive organs in one week; and I suppose other folks are of the same opinion."

"Well," said Patty, thoughtlessly, "I can tell you this, I won't make one of the triplet another Wednesday. It nearly drove me melancholy mad to see that great empty church, and to hear Mr. Canter ranting away there."

"Patty," cried Elizabeth, "you wicked girl! Ma, how can you let her be so profane?"

I don't wonder at Elizabeth being shocked; for, setting aside the thoughtlessness, not to say irreverence, of Patty's speech, Elizabeth thought a deal of Mr. Canter. He certainly seemed a most enlightened young man. Since he'd come to be Mr. Jones's curate, Elizabeth had taken a class at the Sunday-school and a district besides. A very eloquent way with the ladies had Mr. Canter. I thought it was high time I interfered to stop the foolish child; therefore I said, with a look at my husband—and he always said I could look daggers when I liked—

"Father, I wonder at your encouraging Patty to speak like that. Patty, I cannot and will not allow you to make such remarks in my presence. I must say I think, if a deep-read scholar like our Mr. Jones thinks it well to have service of a Wednesday evening, it's not for such as you to set up your opinion against his."

"Yes, but ma, Mr. Jones doesn't come himself not once in six months. One 'ud think, if he cared much about it, he wouldn't let Mr. Canter have it all his own way."

"There, there, Patty, that's quite enough. Don't begin to argue, for goodness' sake," I said. "Do live and let live. Let them that like go to church of a Wednesday. I can't go, for it's ironing night, and I must see to the clothes. And as to wasting the gas, why it seems a pity, but that's their own look-out."

The raisins were finished, and I had been siding up the pips and dirty knives while I spoke; so now I took them in my hand, and

went to see if the girl had got the suet ready. I just heard my husband say as I closed the door—

"My word, Patty, if you haven't set the cat among the pigeons."

I was away some time, for I had to look after several little things—get the rest of the fruit and the apples and what not for the pudding.

I heard Patty's voice as I came along the passage, and when I got into the parlour there she was perched on her father's knee, talking away at a fine rate.

"Hallo, mother!" cried he, "you're just in time. There's bribery and corruption going on. Here's Patty trying to creep up her old father's sleeve. Wants me to buy her no end of fal-lals for this party."

"I should have thought her white muslin would have been quite sufficient, if it was washed and got up with new ribbons," said Elizabeth.

She was never one for spending much, wasn't Elizabeth.

"Now then, Liz, do hold your tongue; arn't I asking for you, too? Look here, ma, I'm tired to death of that muslin. I've worn it I don't know how many times; and besides, it's so awfully old-fashioned. I know you wouldn't like your girls to look dowdy frights, and get no partners all the night; and the Holland and Smith girls 'ul be dressed up to the eyes. I know they will."

"What d'ye say, missis? I think we'll have to get 'em a dress apiece. Liz and our Patty musn't look——"

"I knew he would, old pet!" cried Patty, throwing her arms round his neck and well-nigh choking him; and then she came running to me. "Now, ma, what colour shall it be? Blue suits me best, but then Liz can't wear anything but red."

"Well," said I, "I don't know what to say. I'm afraid it's a piece of extravagance. When I was a girl, I used to make a white muslin last me for years, and mother never thought of buying me such quantities of ribbons as girls want nowadays."

To tell the truth, I wasn't ill-pleased that they should have new gowns; for, after all, muslin doesn't look much after it's once been washed, and I knew, as Patty said, the Hollands and Smiths would be got up no end.

"Ah, some people can afford to wear anything, and look well in it, too," said

Patty, kissing me in her pretty, coaxing way.

"Well, it didn't look amiss, with the skirt tucked up to the very waist, and a pink sash tied with long ends behind—as father can tell you if he will. Goodness me! How many years ago was that? Why, you wore it, Elizabeth, and Patty after you, when you were little trots no higher than this table. I believe I have it to this day, if I only knew where to look for it."

"Aye, we weren't a bad-looking couple when we started life, old lady. Well, and which of the young fellows are you going to set your cap at, Patty? Is it to be Bob Brown?"

"Bob Brown!" said Patty, tossing her head scornfully—"a noodle like that! No, indeed."

"Take care what you're about, Patty. There's many a worse than Bob," said father, "and I'm afraid he's pretty far gone. You shouldn't encourage him if you don't like him."

"What stuff you are putting in the child's head, father," said I.

"I encourage him!" I saw that Patty's cheeks were very red. "Great big stupid! I can't bear him. Of course I can't tell him so; neither can I tell him not to walk home from church with us, and I must answer him when he speaks to me. But encourage him! I don't think anything on earth would induce me to marry Bob Brown."

"My goodness! perhaps you'd better wait till he asks you," said Elizabeth.

I must say I didn't see any occasion for Patty's saying all she did. I always thought Bob Brown a very nice, steady young man, and getting on very well in his business, too. Why Patty should be so dead set against him, I can't tell. There never was any accounting for Patty's likes and dislikes.

I think Patty and Elizabeth would have had words, for Patty wasn't one to stand being snubbed, only Jane Thompson came in at that moment to ask if they were going to the Browns'. She told us she and her brother were going. She understood it was to be quite a grand affair. Emmy had been into their house that morning to ask if they knew of a man to play the piano, so she knew all about it. More than twenty people had been invited. Such a fuss and to-do. A woman to come and help cook the supper

—the carpet up in the back parlour—supper to be in the best bed-room, and I don't know what all. Our Patty was wild with excitement, and father remarked that "old Brown wasn't one to spoil a thing for a pen'orth of paint."

For my part, I was glad Jane Brown had it all to do and not me. I don't hold with one's turning the house out of windows just for one night's junket. I can manage a few folks to tea, with a round game of cards after, and a bit of hot supper. No one better. But as for taking the carpets up, and, as I said before, turning the house topsyturvy, I wouldn't do it for any one.

FAMOUS PERSECUTIONS.

AMONGST the earlier sufferers for their faith were the Albigenses, a sect of people in Languedoc, who, like the Waldenses—a different sect, but with whom they were often confounded—set up a creed which in many points resembled that of the later Protestants, inasmuch as it was a reformation of that of the Roman Catholics. They both rose during the twelfth century—the Albigenses taking their name from Albigeois, the territory where they resided; while the Waldenses are variously estimated as deriving their appellation from a leader named Waldo, or from Vallée (Vaud in the Swiss); hence we also have the name Vaudois—dwellers in valleys—Piedmont being one of their strongholds. For a time very little notice was taken of their schismatic tendencies; but at length Pope Innocent III. roused the French King, Philip Augustus, and under the command of the English Earl, Simon de Montfort, a strong force was poured into the region occupied by the reformers, and a regular crusade commenced. The powers of the Inquisition were spread throughout France; the property of the more wealthy confiscated; and Thoulouse being made the head-quarters of the Inquisitorial army, the stake was brought into requisition, and heretics, real or suspected, were hurried to their death. The most revolting cruelties were inflicted; torture was called in to make the wretched reformers confess; and under the infliction of the rack, or by exposure to fire, the poor creatures, even if innocent of the so called offence, were often made to criminate themselves. It was acknowledged by the Inquisitors that at times they committed the

error of causing the innocent to suffer with those they called guilty; but they had no scruple in saying that "it tended to promote the salvation of many, by sending some to their account at once, and others prematurely to Paradise"! Resistance was not wanting to these cruelties, more than one of the chief Inquisitors falling a victim to the popular fury; but under the fearful oppression the Albigenses dwindled away until the time of the Reformation, when such as remained, in conjunction with the Vaudois, became conformable to the teachings of Zwinglius and the ordinances of Geneva.

In the Protestant history of the Netherlands, the name of the Duke of Alva seems to stand out for evil as that of William of Orange does for the country's good. In a time when religious toleration was unknown, Alva was sent by Philip of Spain as his viceroy, with terrible powers to exercise against the heretics—powers that he did not scruple to exceed, so that blood was shed like water, the scaffolds crowded, and the prisons filled with those whose tortures were those of suspense. The Inquisition exercised its full sway, so that nearly twenty thousand persons are said to have been slain—not in open warfare, but by persecution. The quiet, industrious people fled from the country in alarm, thousands emigrating to England, where they were received by Protestant Elizabeth, bringing with them many of their arts and trade secrets to enrich our commerce in the future. For four years Alva carried on his fierce persecutions, sparing none of the Protestant religion, drenching the land with blood, and inflicting fine, tax, and impost, till, groaning beneath the fearful oppression, the Netherlands hailed a deliverer in William of Nassau, Prince of Orange, under whom the towns of Holland, Zealand, and Flanders cast off the yoke of Catholic Spain. Other cities were gallantly defended in frightful sieges, Haarlem distinguishing itself for the desperate bravery with which for seven months it held out against a large army. The siege is stated to have cost the Spaniards 10,000 men; but the town surrendered at length under a flag of truce, famine having done the work that war could not accomplish. The men of Haarlem had to suffer for their bravery, the enemy taking a most cruel vengeance. Four executioners were employed, and hundreds of the principal citizens were executed. Tired

at length of their task, the victims were tied two and two, and cast into the lake.

A long struggle followed, with varying success, till, enraged at being so long foiled, Philip offered 25,000 golden crowns, with a patent of nobility, to any one who would assassinate William of Orange. The result was an attempt by one Jaureguay, who fired at the prince as he was taking a petition. The ball entered below the right ear and passed out on the other side, the prince falling apparently dead. He recovered, however, but only to fall by the assassin's hand soon after, the fatal shot being fired by Balthasar Gerard, actuated to the deed "by the hope of fame on earth and glory in Heaven."

THE GHOST IN THE SNOW.

CHAPTER I.

THE GOVERNMENT SURVEYING EXPEDITION.

I AM not prone to superstition; although it is my belief that a germ of superstitious feeling, which may be stimulated into action under extraordinary circumstances, or peculiar conditions of mind or body—and which no amount of mental culture nor philosophic reasoning can entirely eradicate—is latent in every human being.

The possession of such a feeling, however, does not necessarily imply that the possessor believes in the existence of a supernatural agency, having control over the ordinary affairs of life; and, for my own part, I confess that—save in the one solitary instance to which this story refers—I have never seen nor heard anything of apparently mysterious import that could not, upon due investigation, be distinctly traced to perfectly natural causes.

I confess, however, my utter inability to account, by any rational means, for the events related in the following pages. Had the story been told to me as a fact, by any one on whose truthfulness I could place the most perfect reliance, I should have taken it for granted that the narrator believed he had heard or seen all that he affirmed, but that he had been deluded by his own over-excited imagination. Nevertheless, I solemnly avow that I did actually behold or hear all that I have related; that the several occurrences were seen or heard at the same moment by my friends and companions for the time being, as clearly and distinctly as

by myself; that nothing had previously occurred to excite our minds, nor (as will appear in the sequel) had we ever even heard of the tragedy which appears to have been partially revealed to us; that the impression made upon me by these revelations remains as perfect as ever; and that in describing what I heard and beheld, I have neither invented nor exaggerated in the slightest degree.

My story, however, requires some little prelude.

On the first formation of the Hudson's Bay Fur Company, in 1669, and for many years afterwards, it was a matter of no slight difficulty to procure a supply of suitable persons to act as clerks, storekeepers, station masters, &c., and to undertake the numerous subordinate employments in the Company's service. Nor is this to be wondered at, when the various requirements demanded from the candidates for such offices are considered.

It was required that they should be young men—those in the first flush of youthful manhood being preferred; of reputable family; possessed of some little education, although the standard in this latter respect was not very high; honest, vigorous, healthful, courageous, and capable of enduring hardship and privation.

If this had been all that was demanded, the difficulty would not have been so great. There are always to be found in England and Scotland—and it was from the latter country that the majority of the Company's subordinate officers were, and are still, to a great extent derived—a sufficient number of young men possessed of these various attributes, eager to enter any service that promises novelty and adventure and future preferment.

But much more than this had to be considered at the early period to which I refer.

These young men, once engaged, were sent away into the—at that period—far distant, wild, and desolate regions of North-west America, there to take up their abode for years, in the midst of an unexplored territory, of vast extent, almost wholly covered with apparently interminable forests, and sparsely populated with savage Indians.

Here, for year after year, they existed, perfectly isolated from civilized society, living in small communities, and often even quite alone, separated from one another by the bleak and icy bay from which the terri-

tory derives its appellation, or by wide extents of dense forests, wild wildernesses, or gloomy morass, through which there was no road, and scarcely a path passable by others than Indians, or hunters almost as wild and savage as the Indians themselves. Some among them were doomed to live a life of dreary solitude, in lonely huts or "stations," buried deep in the heart of the gloomy forest: the Indians and hunters who came from time to time to traffic with them for their winter spoil of fur skins their only visitors, save when at long distant intervals—often a twelvemonth or more apart—some one or more of their fellow-servants passing from one district to another, or some superior officer of the Company bound on a general survey, claimed their hospitality for a night or two, and marked a pleasant era in their monotonous existence.

Thus shut out from the abodes of civilization, almost utterly excluded from society; never by any chance seeing the face or form of a female of their own race; too often possessing little within themselves to occupy their minds, and rarely hearing of anything that was going forward in the busy world beyond the dismal territory in which they were doomed to pass their lives—until, perchance, after long years of service, when youth with all its bright hopes and aspirations had departed from them, they were promoted in middle age to some higher post, and removed from their dreary solitude to one or another of the Company's superior stations or dépôts, in the vicinity of some town or settlement—what marvel that, whatever had once been the disposition or temperament of these individuals, they became morose and gloomy, careless of and unfitted for the society from which they had been so long estranged, and sought and found their sole enjoyment in the gratification of their gross and sensual appetites?

The very attributes which fitted them for the position they held were calculated, under the circumstances in which they were placed, to bring about this unhappy result.

Their vigorous youth, high spirits, and adventurous dispositions demanded greater opportunities for healthy exercise and enjoyment than were open to them. The majority, as I have said, had little within themselves wherewith to occupy their minds during the long periods of solitude and compulsory idleness to which they were subjected, and the few who were possessed of superior edu-

cation soon ceased to profit from this possession. Indeed, it was generally remarked that those who belonged to the best families in the "old country," who had been gentlemen "at home," became eventually the grossest sensualists, and were least inclined to submit to the restraints and resume the habits of civilized society.

These had been the most bitterly disappointed. They had entered the service of the Company, as had many of their less educated comrades, for the sake of the adventurous life they had expected to lead—as so many young men take service in India, or emigrate to other colonies, with the same object in view. Perhaps all are more or less disappointed in the high anticipations they have formed? All, in course of time, become more or less estranged from the conventional habits of English society. Nevertheless, they form a society among themselves, in which they are content to live, and in which they find healthful enjoyment.

But in former days, when it required six months or more to convey a letter to and receive a reply from the settled portions of North America, and when travel in the interior of the country was equally slow and still more difficult, the Hudson's Bay adventurers found themselves, as I have said, not only completely isolated from the rest of the world, but also separated by impassable distances from one another. They could form no society among themselves, and they gradually sank into the condition of semi-savages—those who felt the disappointment most keenly sinking deepest into sensuality.

These things are changed now; travel is more rapid and communication more easy, while thriving settlements and populous towns and villages now exist, where formerly dense, gloomy forest extended in every direction; but even now the employés of the Hudson's Bay Company, who are stationed in the interior of the vast territory, lead lonely, cheerless lives. In early days, it became their constant practice to form connections with the handsomest Indian females, and some of the wealthiest Canadians of the present day are descended from Indian ancestors on the female side.

The connection thus formed, however, not unfrequently led to evil, and sometimes to fatal consequences. The Indian girls were often eager to attract the attention

and gain the favour of the white men, who could present them with cheap but glittering trinkets, and enable them to enhance their dusky charms with the finery, which is as much coveted by the Indian squaw as by her fair European sisters. The young Indians were frequently jealous of the partiality shown to the white men by the young maidens of their tribe; and this jealousy led to quarrels, and occasionally to more evil results. Worse than this, however, the white men, bound by no legal ties to the objects of their choice, often cast them adrift when they tired of them, and took others in their place. The tribe to which the injured squaw belonged sometimes took her part, and the most fearful consequences ensued—the offender being secretly massacred, no one could say by whom.

In a country where no laws existed save those of a man's own free will, and in which religion was utterly cast aside and forgotten, men's consciences soon became completely seared and hardened; morality and justice were alike disregarded; and so far as the former of these virtues was concerned, the European often sank far beneath the level of the Indian.

Sometimes, however, the white man proved faithful to the object of his first choice; and it was no uncommon sight to see an old retired servant of the Hudson's Bay Company living on affectionate terms with his Indian wife and his family of half-breed children—though the squaw, in nearly all such cases, refused to adopt the habits or costume of civilized society, and clung to the last to her blue blanket and scarlet leggings.

The old servants of the Hudson's Bay Company almost always grew rich. During their long exile from civilization they had no means of expending their salaries, which consequently accumulated in their hands. Moreover, they had many private opportunities of acquiring wealth, which they usually took advantage of; and when, finally, they retired from the service on pension, they continued, generally, to live a solitary existence for choice—seldom living up to their means.

From time to time, however, when these retired servants of the Company received a visit from some ancient comrade, it is said that it was their custom to drink deep, and to keep up their orgies throughout the night, and until daylight dawned

and found them frequently in a condition of helpless inebriety, lying senseless beneath the table, where they lay until they gradually recovered from their debauch. The peculiar habits of these men gave rise to strange stories concerning them, which were currently believed by the superstitious Canadians, who fancied that the old "Nor-west Men" had sold themselves to the evil one. It was said that imps and demons joined with them in their revels; and persons who passed near their houses while the carouses were going on declared that they heard strange, unearthly shouts, and fiendish peals of laughter, which were kept up until the approach of day.

When these old "Nor-west Men" died, their houses were often left untenanted until they began to fall into decay. There was almost invariably some quarrel among the heirs respecting the will, or the succession to the property, which consequently fell into the hands of the lawyers, who, having once got possession, held on to it as long as possible, or as long as there was anything to hold on to.

Thus it came about that, in course of time, the houses were believed to be haunted. Unaccountable noises were heard proceeding from them; and though these noises were, no doubt, occasioned by the owls, rats, bats, and other vermin which found refuge in them, and commenced their revels or their hunt after prey at nightfall, the simple Canadian habitants, and others who professed to disregard such superstitious fancies, and smiled with scornful pity at the ignorance of the habitants, were chary of passing near the deserted houses after darkness had set in.

There is hardly a district in Canada in which one of these so-called haunted houses is not to be found. There was one, a few years ago, near the city of Montreal; and, for aught I know to the contrary, the old house may still be in existence. But though I have passed by it at all hours, by night and by day, I cannot say that I have heard any strange noise proceeding from it, or that I ever saw anything calculated to cause me the least alarm.

While travelling through Upper Canada, some eight or nine years ago, I met, at the hotel in Guelph, a young Government surveyor, whom I will designate by the name of Markham.

The long, cold Canadian winter was just

beginning to set in, and Markham, consequently, was making preparations to start on a surveying expedition—surveying being necessarily only carried on during the winter, as it is impossible to live in the backwoods during the summer and autumn, by consequence of the malaria which exhales from the numerous swamps, and the swarms of mosquitoes and other venomous insects which infest the forests at those seasons; moreover, the swamps of themselves are sufficient to render surveying impracticable until they are frozen over.

The preparations necessary to be made by the leader of a surveying party are very numerous. It is astonishing what a number of assistants and labourers are required. There are the chain-bearers; the wood-cutters, to cut down trees to mark the boundaries, when the survey of a tract of land has been completed; the cook—sometimes more than one cook, when the party is unusually large; besides drivers and other labourers—all to be engaged for the season.

Then there are provisions to be supplied, and vehicles to carry the provisions, and the poles, canvas and cordage for the tents.

Besides all these, Markham had a sleigh, or cariole, of his own; and a man, whose duty it was to drive the sleigh, and act as a servant, and make himself generally useful.

Then there was the amount of wages to be paid each man to be settled; and I don't know what besides. However, all these matters were at length arranged, and Markham and his "gang" were to set forth on the expedition on the following Monday. It was now Tuesday; so the men had nearly a week during which to make their own little preparations—to purchase clothing, and tobacco, and other trifles, and to bid good-bye to their friends; for six months would elapse ere they would return to Guelph.

Markham was to commence operations near Lake Nepissing, at a spot several miles beyond any settlement. He and I had become, in a few days, very great friends, as usually cold and reserved Englishmen will do when they are thrown together, as we were, far distant from our native land, and near the extreme verge of civilization; and as I had a great desire to test the manner of living in the backwoods, I proposed to accompany the expedition to the lake, and spend a few weeks with the party.

Markham gladly acceded to my request, and frankly offered to share his own private tent with me, at the same time expressing his wish that I could remain with him throughout the winter.

"For I assure you," he added, "it's precious dull for a fellow to have no others but these Canadian chaps for his companions, for months together."

The "gang" set out on their long journey on the appointed day. Markham and I followed in the cariole the next morning, and overtook the party before night, when we camped down together till daylight, and then proceeded in company until we reached our destination.

It is not my purpose in this paper to describe a winter spent in the backwoods of America—a thing that has been done over and over again, ad nauseam. Suffice it to say that I spent a month very pleasantly at the camp. The weather was intensely cold—the thermometer ranging from fifteen degrees down to zero of Fahrenheit—but generally fine; and the tents were sufficiently warm and comfortable.

Markham, whenever the weather permitted, was busily occupied with his survey; but I had my gun with me, and I frequently brought in, after a few hours' stroll in the frost, a welcome addition to our supper in the shape of a hare, or a Canadian partridge, or some other kind of game.

Sunday was always a holiday with us. Markham and I sat reading in our tent, or took a stroll through the forest, and the men generally employed themselves in repairing their clothes, while they spun yarns to one another in Canadian French.

I think it was on the third Saturday evening, when, just before we turned into our hammocks for the night, Markham observed—

"I'll tell you what, J——, if the weather keeps fine and clear, I'd like to take a drive in the cariole to the head of the lake, to-morrow. There's a high cataract, and I've been told that the surrounding scenery is magnificent. Of course, we shall see it at a disadvantage in the winter; still, it is said to be grand and impressive at all seasons. What say you? Will you accompany me? We will set out soon after breakfast, and the back after nightfall—long before the men gave gone to roost."

Of course, I gladly consented to anything for a change; and two of the men were set

to clean out the cariole and brush up the harness, in readiness for the morrow.

The morning turned out to be fine, as usual. The frost was intense, but there was scarcely a breath of wind; and any degree of cold is endurable to a person well wrapped up, in calm weather.

As soon as we rose in the morning we set to work to provision ourselves for the day's journey. No ardent spirits are supplied to the men, either on a wood-cutting or surveying expedition, in the backwoods of Canada. It has been proved beyond doubt that they are in better health and able to do more work without any such stimulants; though a small stock of brandy is carried by the leader of the expedition for medicinal purposes. Tea and sugar, or molasses, are supplied in abundance, and tea is partaken of at every meal. Markham, however, in addition to the keg of spirits supplied by Government, carried a small private store of brandy, and various other little luxuries, for his own use.

There is a small, half-breed village, in the heart of the forest, between the spot where we were encamped and the south shore of the lake; and at this village—if we could find it—we intended to bait and rest our pony, and stop to dine; and as we should have to trespass upon the hospitality of the inhabitants of the place—the only village or settlement in existence, so far as was known, between our camp and the North Pole—we provided ourselves with a quantity of salt pork, and molasses, and tea, beyond what we could possibly require, that we might be enabled to repay the little hospitalities we expected to receive. Markham also stored a couple of bottles of cognac beneath the buffalo robes at the head of the sleigh, and we likewise carried with us a patent coffee warmer, so that we might be able to heat some water by means of burning spirits, if we should find it necessary.

We were in no great haste; and when at length everything was prepared for our journey, we sat down to breakfast.

Scarcely, however, had we taken our seats, when the distant jingle of sleigh bells was distinctly heard, ringing musically through the keen, clear, frosty air. The sound became more and more distinct, until, mingled with it, we could hear the tramp of horses' hoofs on the hard-frozen snow. We rose from our seats, and looked forth from the tent,

and soon saw a sleigh approaching the camp. Presently it arrived within hailing distance, and a cheery voice shouted—

"Camp ahoy! What camp is that?"

"Government surveying!" shouted Markham, in reply.

"I thought as much," returned the solitary occupant of the sleigh, which was now but a few yards distant. "I left the house on the shores of the Trading Lake (the last pretence of anything like a public-house between Lake Simcoe and Lake Nepissing) before daybreak this morning. I saw your smoke rising in the air, miles away; and when I sighted the camp, I suspected, from the whiteness of your tents, that you were a surveying, and not a wood-chopping party. I'm pretty sharp set by this time, though I breakfasted before I started; so I thought I'd stop and rest my pony, and take second breakfast with you, more comfortably than in the open sleigh."

TABLE TALK.

AN old friend of ours makes a point of grumbling at every institution noticed in his morning paper. The Duke's wedding. "Bah! what did he want to get married for?" The improvements round St. Paul's. "Pish! the old railings were right enough." The last thing he has fallen foul of is the daily notice of the state of affairs at Oxford and Cambridge connected with aquatic matters. "Bah! Tub practice—pair oars—coaching from the bank! I'm sick of it, sir—sick of it. As the old woman, Aunt Jane, says in the ONCE A WEEK story, young men might stop at home to row, and not waste time over it at college. If we go on like this, making such a fuss at Putney every spring, with our girls wanting blue dresses, blue bonnets, blue parasols, blue gloves, and, confound it all, sir, even blue stockings—why, by all that's blue, we shall soon degenerate into a boat race."

WHAT ARE messieurs les chefs de cuisine about that they do not go with the times? Here is a fishwoman made famous in song, and in her honour we have caps and chapeaux of the newest mode. Why, then, should we not have dishes named after the same lady? Here is an opening, also a suggestion. What say the cooks to salmon with *sauce piquante à la fille de Madame Angot*?

Perhaps, though, it would seem wanting in novelty; for tell any Billingsgate lady that her salmon is not fresh, and there would be an abundance of *sauce piquante à la fille de Madame Angot*.

THE GEOGRAPHICAL SOCIETY of Italy has received from Alexandria, with the news of the death of the explorer Miani, two living individuals of small dimensions, of the tribes of the Akka or Tikku-Tikki. One of these pigmies is 18 years old and 40 inches in height; the other is 16 years old and 31 inches high. They are stated by Miani to belong to the race of dwarfs described by Herodotus, and recently re-discovered by the German explorer, Schweinfurth. They are thin-limbed and knock-kneed, have spherical and prognathous crania, very long limbs, copper skins, and crisp, tow-like hair. Do they possess the missing link?

A READER of the morning papers during the last few days might have been amused by a glance down the advertising columns, and thanked his stars, as he thought of the expense, that he was not Parliamentary mad. In the *Telegraph* especially there was food for the thoughtful mind, for after a long string of electioneering addresses, coming like the mauvais quart d'heure after dinner, was the following advertisement:—"Messrs. Blank continue to advance large amounts on notes of hand simply."

AN ENTERPRISING firm is advertising all over the country its Virgin Vinegar. What is it? Is it simply our old friend with which we sprinkle our oysters, mix our salad dressing, and soak our pickles; or is it the compound essence of old maids?

Contributions should be legibly written, and only on one side of each leaf.

Communications to the Editor should be addressed to the Office, 19, Tavistock-street, Covent-garden, W. C.

All Contributions are attentively considered, and unaccepted MSS. are returned on receipt of stamps for postage; but the Editor cannot hold himself responsible for any accidental loss. No unaccepted MSS. will be returned until a written application has been made for them.

Terms of Subscription for ONCE A WEEK, free by post:—Weekly Numbers for Six Months, 5s. 5d.; Monthly Parts, 5s. 8d.

ONCE A WEEK

NEW SERIES.

No. 320.

February 14, 1874.

Price 2d.

JACK'S SISTER; OR, WOMANLY PAST QUESTION.

CHAPTER XII.

AND BREAKS!



UNCTUAL to the hour fixed upon, though sadly disturbed in mind, Merle found himself entering the shady depths of the yew-tree walk which makes—or made in that day—so pleasant a shelter from the sun in

the romantic gardens of St. John's. He had attended chapel in the morning, and a lecture into the bargain; but, in the irritated and fevered state of his mind, it may be doubted whether the effect of either was more than "words, words, words;" and with a kind of half-longing for protection against himself, or sentiment of any sort, he had gone in search of Jack. Jack's oak, however, was sported; and failing that refuge, Merle had drifted back to his own rooms, where he set himself to think of what he should say at the interview, and how he should say it.

Vain attempt! He could decide on nothing, and only saw the laughing light in those blue eyes gradually drowned in fast-dripping tears. This would never do; and to drive the vision away, he opened the nearest book—Charles Baudelaire's poems—read a few pages, stared absently at

a floridly-coloured print on the wall, the face not unlike Minnie's; read on again for some minutes, the expression of his mouth growing harder and more repellent with every word, and his eyes wandering with a sort of defiant self-indulgence to the sketch aforesaid; and then—flung the book to the other end of the room, and starting up with flushed and agitated face, unlocked his desk; and after tossing out half the contents in search of what he wanted, and coming on that luckless photo of Minnie, which was crushed summarily into a corner and an oath flattened on top of it, he got his hands on a packet of Enid's letters.

Refugium peccatorum!

As an Italian peasant girl will fly to the image of her patron saint as a refuge and assistance from some trouble which is stronger than herself, Merle opened the first that came, and with a similar result; for as the Roman Catholics go through their saints to their God—like infants catching at the hand of an elder sister to guide their tottering steps to the father—so Merle, resting his haggard, dizzy eyes on the sweet, calm words which recalled so forcibly the calm, sweet presence of *his* patron saint, was able by and by to bow his hot face over the talisman of peace, and cry out—

"Oh, God, be merciful unto me a sinner!"

A simple prayer, my lads; but one poor, cast-out sinner, trembling at the outer gate of the Temple eighteen hundred years ago, used no better when, in the humility of penitence, he called upon the God of sinners, and, as Scripture tells us, went down justified accordingly.

Some men would have gone to their God first in preference to a woman, and found surer aid. I honour them. Different constitutions, however, require different remedies; and to Merle, weak, morbid, and excitable, turned by every straw—and totter-

ing between Positivism and Rationalism till the faith which he was to preach to others seemed slipping from his grasp altogether—some living, human help was absolutely necessary to put him in the way of seeking a heavenly one; and being as far removed from a hardened libertine as he was from a pure and honourable man, he was no sooner startled by some sudden temptation or unexpected circumstance to a glimpse of the depth to which he had fallen, than a sense of utter unworthiness to appeal to Infinite Goodness, combined with a miserable doubt as to the existence of that Infinity at all, would have given him over in despair to those "seven worse spirits," ever ready to attack a sinking soul, if he had not been able to lay hold of the loving faith of the one being who, with all his own human passions and weaknesses, was yet nearer to perfection and tenderer to his imperfection than aught else in this world.

Through Enid, then, and through her love for him, poor Merle managed to reach after a glimpse of the mightier love of Infinite Perfection; and who shall say, though the vision faded a moment later, that that single instant of sight was unavailing, or unproductive of fruit, in the gathering day of the heavenly harvests?

There is a great talk nowadays about the falling-off of feminine dignity and virtue, about the fastness and frivolity of our girls, the unsexed ambition and aspirings of our women.

And the answer to this is—first, that girls do but follow where men lead them, and rather than be deserted for actresses and horsebreakers, make themselves as like to these enchantresses as lies in their power; and secondly, that because men despise and wrong women, the latter mean to make themselves independent of their tyrants, and take the bread from their mouths by doing male work better than the latter can do it for themselves.

In my opinion, both arguments are wrong. But I have not studied the second subject, and am therefore incompetent to pronounce on it, except in this much: no ambition or aspiring can be unwomanly which has for its end the good or comfort of a fellow creature, and is *actually* productive of a higher result than the pain and discomfort to self involved in its fulfilment.

I make these cursory remarks merely for the sake of strengthening those good and earnest

women who, under scorn, opprobrium, and difficulties of every sort—not the least being the spurious imitations of their strong-minded and empty-headed sisters—are labouring heart and soul, without hope of reward, or even acknowledgment in this world, for the benefit of the weak and suffering of their sex.

It was not to these, however, that I was going to allude; but to the "girls of the period," the smoking, flirting, slangy targets for the arrows of the *Saturday Review*, the crying evil of modern society, at whose anomalies the severe and well-meaning of either sex are waging so fierce a crusade with so little success. Ah, me! Have we never heard the fable of the sun and the wind? never read how the persecutions of the middle ages *produced* heretics? It seems not.

If we had, I think we should praise girls for their virtues rather than sneer at them for their faults, appeal to their wisdom rather than mock at their folly, show them the reverence of one man for their woman's purity rather than the admiration of a dozen empty-headed puppies for its shame; and prove to them how immense is their influence for good, sooner than suffer them, from sheer ignorance of that influence, to sink into evil.

It is very well to talk of innocence; but innocence of evil is not ignorance. The one, God willing, may be preserved through life.

The other, I fear me, does not often last beyond boarding-school days in this nineteenth century; and by trying to keep up the sham after the reality is gone, we only teach our children deceit, and leave them to enter on the battle of life unarmed, instead of fenced with the sword of truth and the shield of purity. If men look on girls as toys, do not girls treat them as a sort of wild animal, whom they alternately pat and tease through some invisible bars which prevent the "noble beast" from turning and rending them, instead of learning to regard men as their brothers—the common children of a common Father—accountable one for another even as amenable to one law, and members of one family?

Whose fault that it is not so? Ours, who keep up the farce of expecting our girls to "think as children and talk as children," when they are in reality women, and should have put away "childish ways" with their

dolls and pinafores. Girls are not soulless puppets. They can think if they try, and if we let them. Take the fastest and most frivolous, and show her—not the triumphs of the dolls of the Burlington Arcade over a hairdresser's block—but a sinful man saved, a weak man strengthened, or a good man comforted by the mere memory of some pure and gentle woman whose life has touched his and blessed it in the contact.

Open their eyes to see how the loosest and most dissipated among men will strive to mask their real characters, and curb their freedom of speech, when standing in the presence of a girl whose modesty and dignity command the respect they have long ceased to pay to the generality of the sex; whose lips have never learnt slang, whose eyes have never been taught to ogle, but who looks in simplicity and speaks in truth: women who don't make much of a man for having wrung the hearts of their fellow-women, whose ears are too pure to tolerate the wittiest of "double entendres," whose minds are too noble for any feeling but sorrow for those lower than themselves. Aye, force these shallow little souls to mark how jealously the "swell" who flirts and fools with them, and makes a parade of his senseless worthlessness in their presence, will guard the very mention of some pure little sister, or quiet, gentle cousin, away in the old home, as names too sacred and too precious for handling in the society where they reign—even precious enough to check them at the gates of Hell, and lead them back into the straight road.

And I think the most flippant and frivolous of the lot will begin to ask herself whether she has not been acting under a grand mistake, whether fastness and flirting *do* pay in the long run, and to yearn after the loving reverence and the influence for good which are the royal right of so many and many an honest English girl like Enid Leyburn.

This, however, has been a long digression. Let us return to Merle, on his way to meet Minnie Bruce in the yew-tree walk.

The day was both wet and stormy. A wild equinoctial gale howling over the town, long drifts of ink-black cloud chasing each other over a grey, watery sky, and breaking every five minutes in fierce showers of rain

and hail, which rattled madly at door and window, and lashed every little pool and gutter into a whirl of fury. Hardly a soul was abroad in the streets; and at first sight the gardens appeared absolutely empty of man, woman, or child. Nearer approach, however, convinced Merle that one woman, at any rate, had dared to brave the weather; and it was with quite as much embarrassment as relief that he recognized the edge of a waterproof and a dragged feather huddled up for shelter under the darkest shadow of the yew trees.

His purgatory was at hand; and the most indifferent of spectators could not but have noticed the ashen pallor of the face, and the nervous tremble in the voice, as he held out his hand, saying, with an effort at cheerfulness—

"Well, Minnie, this is weather for you to be out in."

She heeded neither words nor manner. Her own face was very white, and her eyes unnaturally brilliant, as, hurrying towards him, she put both her hands in his with the impetuous gesture of a child—

"Merle! oh, I am so glad you are come. I feared you would not; and now you are here you must, dear Merle, you will, come straight to father with me, won't you?"

"To your father!" Merle repeated, feeling, despite his forebodings, as if a can of cold water had been suddenly dashed in his face. "What for, in the name of Heaven?"

"To tell him all. Merle, when that cruel letter of yours came this morning, it was he took it in, an' read it aloud: me standing in front o' him the while, feeling as if I'd die with shame to see his face looking as though he'd got his death wound, and his hand putting me from him like as if I were some sinful creature, not fit to be touched. Ah, you may swear! Gentlemen always do when they're put out, it seems. But I never heard father swear till this morning, when he laid his han' on the Bible, and swore by the 'mighty God to find out who'd writ that letter, an' taught me to deceive him."

"Did he not ask you, Minnie?" Merle inquired, his heart sinking within him at the result of his late-repentant folly.

"Aye, Merle, that he did, over and over again; first orderin' me and then beggin' me to tell him—even promisin' to forgive me if I'd confess everything, and swear never to hold no intercourse by word or writing with you again."

"And you—what did you say?"

"I, Merle? Nothing. Hadn't I promised you never to speak your name without letting you know? What could I say?"

"You dear, good little girl!" cried Merle, forgetting his resolutions, and pressing her hands fondly on the impulse of the moment. "If ever there was a trump on earth— But what an old brute your father must be. I thought he was fond of you."

"And he is, Merle; so fond that he'd cut out his heart to do me a real service. It's hurtin' him worse than that now to believe what he does o' me. Do you know what that is, Merle?"

"Don't talk like that, Minnie; men don't mean half they say when they're in a rage."

"Father wasn't in a rage, and he meant every word. Aye, an' he'd cause to think it," the girl added, slowly. "Haven't I been deceiving him for months and months?"

"Pshaw! no great deceit, after all, Minnie."

"Don't you think so?" and she fixed her great luminous eyes on him. "You take it very lightly, Merle; but I doubt you'll not get father to do the same."

"I've not the least intention of trying," said Merle, candidly. "Now, little one, don't begin to cry. You've not told me how the row ended yet."

"This way, then. When father found I'd tell him nothing—though I did promise him he'd know all soon—I meant when I'd told you"—Merle winced—"he locked me in the parlour and went and searched my room; and found that book—Byron's poems—you gave me."

"Curse the book! Well?"

"And a few dry flowers—nothing else. You had the letters and verses, you know; an' I had put your photo here"—laying her hand on the bosom of her gown—"so no one could take it."

Merle drew a long breath, and his colour changed twice before he was able to answer, with a desperate effort at coolness—

"Then, after all, he was not much the wiser. It was a good shot of yours, Minnie, to bring me the letters; for I know I only signed that stupid scrawl yesterday with an M."

He might have added that with the rest of his correspondence with her he had used a feigned hand. Merle was prudent in his love affairs.

"It was a pity you wrote it at all, my dear."

"Yes, by Jove! and I'm awfully sorry, I am indeed; but it was so irritating to go all that distance, and not find you after all, and I've such a devil of a temper. You mustn't mind, Minnie."

"I don't," she said, looking at him lovingly. "You can't help it, but—"

"What?"

"You used that note paper of yours with 'Magdalen College' on it."

"Confound it!—so I did. But, after all, I am not the only man in Magdalen."

"Father said if he had to take me and it to the Proctor, or even the Dean hisself, he'd find out where it came from."

"He wouldn't find that much go. No Dean or Proctor has any right to question you, Minnie; don't you fear."

"I fear nought but father's anger, Merle; an' I have angered him sorely. Oh, love, you don't know what a bitter grief it is to me. I only slipped out now, though he told me if I left the house without his leave I should never enter it again, because I thought when you saw what you'd brought on me, you'd come round an' tell him all yourself."

"Come round!" Merle repeated, fairly aghast at the proposition. "Do you know what you're asking?—that I should utterly ruin myself, and destroy every prospect I have in life. Is that what you want, Minnie?"

"You know it isn't," she said, tenderly. "But oh, Merle, your folk'd never be so hard on you as all that."

"You don't know them, child. I tell you it would be utter destruction to me if your father were even to guess at my name in connection with this affair. Do you believe me?"

"Merle, don't speak so sharp. I'm nigh heartbroken, I think. No, it's not that I blame you, dear"—as he muttered a half angry, half remorseful ejaculation—"I don't; and I'd suffer double for you, so you only loved me to the last; but listen, love—I'm nought but a child, I know, but still I can see this can't go on for ever. 'Tis but your second year in college, Merle. Surely you never mean to hold your tongue till you've got that curacy. Sooner or later the end must come, an' your people 'll have to know as well's mine. Why not let us trust 'em now, or at latest in th' long vacation?"

Her hands were clasped on his arm, the rain-drops trickled off the brim of the old straw hat, and mingled with big, pitiful tears on her pale, uplifted face. The cold, wet wind blew her curls about in brown, tangled streamlets, and moaned among the branches overhead.

The end!

Had he not come here to fix it? And now that she was proposing it herself—for in his confusion he somehow thought her "end" and his was the same—why should his heart beat like a leaden clapper? Alas! he knew his own weakness too well to dare prolong the present state of things, even to the end of this Lent term, let alone the long vacation; yet his voice was very broken as he answered, huskily—

"Yes, I suppose it must be. It's very hard on me, Minnie. You believe that, don't you? I can't bear to think of losing you; but—but, as you say, the end *must* come—sooner or later. So I suppose, for your sake, I ought to—to say good-bye to our pleasant friendship. It's an awful pull for me, upon my soul it is; but I never thought it would get you into trouble in this way."

He spoke as hesitatingly and bunglingly as might be expected from the most eloquent under circumstances so utterly humiliating to any man with a grain of self-respect; but Minnie's hands still clasped his arm, and her full, childlike eyes were fixed on his with a blank, uncomprehending look more trying than tears.

"I don't understand you," she said, very simply. "Do you mean good-bye for a time? That we are not to see each other till you can tell father that I am to be your wife? Will it be long, Merle? It is hard; but you needn't call it losing me. You would find me just the same after ten years, or more."

"Minnie! Minnie! don't try to make me feel a worse blackguard than I do now. If you knew how bitterly ashamed I am, to have let you imagine that I—— But, after all, there's been no harm done. It was only flirting: lots of girls go in for nothing more every day; and if you just tell your father that you've been foolish, or—or— But you know what to tell him; only just add that it's all over—quite over, and that you'll never see the person again. Deuced hard it is, isn't it, my pet? But I suppose he will have it. And be very careful not to

let him get at my name. I know, Minnie dear, that I can trust you for that."

"Your name! Oh, you poor, wicked coward—and are you thinking of only that?"

He had not looked at her while he stammered through his speech. His eyes had been on the ground throughout; but now he lifted them with an angry start. This wild-looking girl, shrinking back from him, with the hoarse voice and fierce eyes—surely it could not be Minnie! No, it was gone even as the flush of wrath and shame mounted into his face; and Minnie herself was clinging to him again, her soft cheek against his shoulder, and a very passion of sobs and tears shaking her body from head to foot, as she implored him to forgive her. She had not meant what she said. She thought she must be going crazy; or how could she speak so to him—her love, her king! Of course, he was only thinking of her good, and she had misunderstood him.

"Only forgive me, Merle, darling, and I will do anything, wait any time, so you say that you never meant to be untrue to me."

It was a sore temptation. He was only twenty-one, after all; and he had grown very fond of the girl. Perhaps, now that he had to give her up, something like real love was stirring in his heart; and even a stronger and better man might have found it hard to put that fair, flushed face from its resting place, and blot out the loving, trustful light from those large, sweet eyes, which were trying so vainly to drink in hope and comfort from his. Enid's memory was not strong enough to help him here. Prayer never occurred to him; and, weak as he was, he had undoubtedly caught at the too sweet snare her words offered, and knotted the toils closer around them both, but for one thing, one ally which proved a surer aid in the hour of peril than either prudence or principle.

Temper!

Merle's was not sweet, as you may have seen, even at the best of times. It was particularly sensitive to reproof, and exceedingly difficult to recover when once lost. That luckless word "coward" has roused a devil before now in meeker men; and the bitter consciousness that it was deserved drove the shaft deeper home. He could use it to *himself*—tell himself with wrathful sorrow that he was a coward and a blackguard; but that was quite a different thing to hearing it from the lips of a young

girl. The vile sound shocked him at first beyond anger; but when Minnie burst into that flood of penitent tears, fierce resentment was already rankling in Merle's breast; and even while she clung to him, sobbing and begging for forgiveness, the thought crossed his mind that under no circumstances could the woman who had used that word to him be quite the same as before, and that perhaps it was as well the crisis had come thus early. He must break it off now. Better so than later.

Yet how pretty she was!

So sweetly, winningly pretty, and she loved him so passionately! His voice when he answered her could not be otherwise than gentle; though he made no effort to meet her eyes, or hold her to him, and the words came slowly and awkwardly.

"I have no right to bid you do anything, Minnie; but you are correct in saying that I am thinking of your good when I tell you we had better part. It is unselfish on my part, at any rate; for you must know what pleasure your society has given me. Perhaps I have been wrong in asking so much of it hitherto, and have given you a—a false idea of the future; but you can't blame me more than I blame myself: only I don't think you take into account what temptation a little pleasant intimacy with a girl as sweet and charming as yourself is to a poor lonely undergraduate, who is unfortunate enough to care for something more than Greek and muscles. You must not think unkindly of me in days to come, Minnie; for though I am forced—"

She interrupted him. Almost at the first word he felt a shiver run through her entire body; her head was lifted from his breast, and her hands relaxed their clasp on his gown. It was hard work then not to break off his speech, and take her back to his arms. But he fought down the inclination, and let her shrink away from him, till when she spoke she was standing nearly a yard off—her face white as snow, her lips glued together, and one hand clenched upon her breast, as if to force back the emotions struggling to escape. There was little trace of the bright, childish look, or loving, childish tones, as she said, very calmly and distinctly—

"Then—I am stupid, and do not understand all you say, but—you do not mean to marry me at all!"

She was only a bookseller's daughter, re-

member; and the lower orders have a way of discussing in plain words subjects to which ladies will not allude. Merle muttered a curse—whether at her want of delicacy or his want of wisdom is not known.

"My dear girl! Have I not often told you I have not got a farthing in the world? How can I ever hope to marry any one?"

"Then—when you were making love to me—when you made me love you, when you called me your own, and told me I must think of you before even my own father, you never thought of marrying me—never dreamt of making me your wife?"

"For God's sake, Minnie, don't reproach me. I know I've been wrong and foolish; but I never meant to pain you or get you into trouble. Flesh and blood is not stone, child, and—don't be too hard on me. Some men might have done worse, and—"

"Some men!" she repeated, voice and eyes suddenly lighting up in one flash of intense scorn. "Men! You don't call yourself a man, do you? Oh, my God, my God, that I should have loved a thing like this!"

He bit his lip savagely, and clenched his hands till the nails cut deeply into the white, smooth palm. But he made no answer, none; and silence fell between them both.

It was a picture for Leslie or Calderon to paint. The long, narrow avenue; its low, black boughs meeting overhead in a sombre arch, pierced at one end by a pale streak of light, which drew a white line round the slight figure of the girl, as she stood in the centre, half shrouded, half exposed by the damp, heavy folds of her cloak; her hat fallen back, her lifted hands clasped in the energy of appeal, the wet hair blown off from her white, shadowy face, out of which the great, luminous eyes burned like coals of fire; and the dark figure of the student leaning against a tree, his downcast face showing ghastly in that pale, weird light, his cap dragged down over his brows and his gown gathered tightly round him.

A criminal before his judge—for she was not Minnie Bruce then, even to him. Scorn and shame had transfigured her once and for ever. The light-hearted, simple girl never lived again after that supreme shock of betrayal.

"There is nothing more to understand," she said at last; and her voice sounded faint and sick. "I may as well go now."

"Not without forgiving me, Minnie,"

Merle answered, putting out his hands to detain her. "I can never forgive myself."

There were tears in his eyes and in his voice. He knew by the quiver of her lips that the woman in her was troubled.

"Say good-bye, and kiss me once, Minnie, darling," he pleaded again, coming nearer.

It was a grand mistake. A woman can always forgive, even in the hour of her greatest wrong; but forgetfulness such as his proposal implied is not in human nature. He recognized his folly by the almost loathing on her face, as she stepped back, putting him away as though he had offered her an insult. In my opinion he had.

"Let me pass. God forgive you, if He will—I never can, till He blots out of my heart the kisses you've shamed my mouth with already—the kisses you won from me, while you were deceiving me all the time."

She passed by him as she spoke—crossing his path without another look, and putting her hat over her face as she went out into the wind and rain. How he felt—but any man who has ever brought himself into a like position can tell Merle's feelings, as, too unnerved even to return to the college, he leant his face against the moss-grown trunk of one of the yew trees, and groaned aloud.

"Mr. Kinnardson."

He turned round, his heart leaping high as he saw her at his side again. Had she relented?

"I forgot something," she said, and her voice was cold and hard as a stranger's. "You came here, I believe, to provide against the chance of my saving my good name, and retaining my father's love by betraying your secret. You need have no fear on the subject. Unless you tell of yourself, you are quite safe from any danger from me."

He tried to speak, but whether in deprecation or thanks I know not. The words did not come, and she did not stay to hear them. Like a grey shadow she glided swiftly away into the storm, and Merle saw her no more.

Some pleasures are over dearly bought. Had Merle seen *all* that was before him, when he first lingered to flirt with the bookseller's blue-eyed little daughter, he might not have cared to prove the truth of that saying, "*Le jeu ne vaut pas la chandelle.*"

THE ESCAPE FROM WORCESTER, WRITTEN BY THE KING.

THE narrative is dated Newmarket, Sunday, October 3, and Tuesday, October 5, 1680, and his Majesty commences with relating that, after the battle was lost, he began to think which was the best way of saving himself; and the first thought that came into his head was of getting if possible to London, which he communicated only to Lord Wilmot, though there were many persons of quality who accompanied him from the field of battle. They went the first night about twenty miles, to a place called White Ladys, hard by Tong Castle, by the advice of Mr. Giffard, where they got some little refreshment of bread and cheese. This White Ladys was a private house that Mr. Giffard, who was a Staffordshire man, told the King belonged to honest people that lived thereabouts—six brothers, named Penderell—viz., William, John, Richard, Humphrey, George, and another, who all lived in the wood, having little farms there, and labouring for their living in cutting down wood, &c.

Just as they came thither, a country fellow informed them that there were 3,000 of the King's horse hard by Tong Castle, upon the heath, all in disorder, under David Leslie, and some other of the general officers; upon which some of the quality with the King were earnest with him to go to David Leslie and endeavour to get into Scotland, which his Majesty thought impossible, as the country people would rise upon them, and that men who had deserted him when they were in good order would never stand by him when they had been beaten. His Majesty proceeds in his narrative as follows:—

"This made me take the resolution of putting myself into disguise, and endeavouring to get a-foot to London, in a country fellow's habit, with a pair of ordinary grey cloth breeches, a leathern doublet, and a green jerkin, which I took in the house of White Ladys. I also cut my hair very short, and flung my clothes away, that nobody might see that anybody had been disguising themselves—I acquainting none with my resolution of going to London but my Lord Wilmot, they all desiring me not to acquaint them with what I intended to do, because

they knew not what they might be forced to confess; on which consideration, they with one voice begged me not to tell them what I intended to do.

"So all the persons of quality and officers who were with me, except my Lord Wilmot—with whom a place was agreed upon for our meeting in London if we escaped, and who endeavoured to go on horseback, in regard, as I think, of his being too big to go on foot—were resolved to go and join with the three thousand disordered horse, thinking to get away with them to Scotland. But, as I did before believe, they were not marched six miles, after they got to them, but they were all routed by a single troop of horse; which shows that my opinion was not wrong in not sticking to men who had run away.

"As soon as I was disguised, I took with me a country fellow, whose name was Richard Penderell, whom Mr. Giffard had undertaken to answer for to be an honest man. He was a Roman Catholic, and I chose to trust them, because I knew they had hiding holes for priests, that I thought I might make use of in case of need.

"I was no sooner gone—being the next morning after the battle, and then broad day—out of the house with this country fellow, but being in a great wood I set myself at the edge of the wood, near the highway that was there, the better to see who came after us and whether they made any search after the runaways; and I immediately saw a troop of horse coming by, which I conceived to be the same troop that beat our three thousand horse; but it did not look like a troop of the army's but of the militia, for the fellow before it did not look at all like a soldier.

"In this wood I stayed all day, without meat or drink; and by great good fortune it rained all the time, which hindered them, as I believe, from coming into the wood to search for men that might be fled thither. And one thing is remarkable enough, that those with whom I have since spoken, of them that joined with the horse upon the heath, did say, that it rained little or nothing with them all the day, but only in the wood where I was, this contributing to my safety.

"As I was in the wood I talked to the fellow about getting towards London, and asked him many questions about what gentlemen he knew. I did not find he knew any men of quality in the way towards Lon-

don. And the truth is, my mind changed as I lay in the wood, and I resolved of another way of making my escape; which was to get over the Severn into Wales, and so to get either to Swansea, or some other of the sea towns that I knew had commerce with France, to the end I might get over that way, as being a way that I thought none would suspect my taking; besides that, I remembered several honest gentlemen that were of my acquaintance in Wales.

"So that night, as soon as it was dark, Richard Penderell and I took our journey on foot towards the Severn, intending to pass over a ferry half-way between Bridgenorth and Shrewsbury. But as we were going in the night, we came by a mill where I heard some people talking—memorandum, that I had got some bread and cheese the night before at one of the Penderell's houses, I not going in—and as we conceived, it was about twelve or one o'clock at night, and the country fellow desired me not to answer if anybody should ask me any questions, because I had not the accent of the country.

"Just as we came to the mill, we could see the miller, as I believed, sitting at the mill door, he being in white clothes, it being a very dark night. He called out—

"'Who goes there?'

"Upon which Richard Penderell answered—

"'Neighbours going home,' or some such-like words.

"Whereupon the miller cried out—

"'If you be neighbours, stand, or I will knock you down.'

"Upon which, we believing there was company in the house, the fellow bade me follow close; and he ran to a gate that went up a dirty lane, up a hill, and opening the gate, the miller cried out, 'Rogues! rogues!' and thereupon some men came out of the mill after us, which I believed were soldiers. So we fell a-running, both of us, up the lane, as long as we could run, it being very deep and very dirty, till at last I bade him leap over a hedge, and lie still to hear if anybody followed us; which we did, and continued lying down upon the ground about half an hour, when, hearing nobody come, we continued our way to the village upon the Severn, where the fellow told me there was an honest gentleman, one Mr. Woolfe, that lived in that town,* where I might be with

* Mr. Francis Woolfe lived at Madely.

great safety, for that he had hiding holes for priests. But I would not go in till I knew a little of his mind, whether he would receive so dangerous a guest as me; and therefore stayed in a field, under a hedge, by a great tree, commanding him not to say it was I, but only to ask Mr. Woolfe whether he would receive an English gentleman—a person of quality—to hide him the next day, till we could travel again by night, for I durst not go out but by night.

“Mr. Woolfe, when the country fellow told him that it was one that had escaped from the Battle of Worcester, said that for his part it was so dangerous a thing to harbour anybody that was known, that he would not venture his neck for any man, unless it were the King himself. Upon which Richard Penderell, very indiscreetly, and without any leave, told him that it was I. Upon which Mr. Woolfe replied, that he should be very ready to venture all he had in the world to secure me. Upon which Richard Penderell came and told me what he had done, at which I was a little troubled; but then there was no remedy, the day being just coming on, and I must either venture that, or run some greater danger.

“So I came into the house a back way, where I found Mr. Woolfe, an old gentleman, who told me he was very sorry to see me there, because there were two companies of the militia foot at that time in arms in the town, and kept a guard at the ferry, to examine everybody that came that way, in expectation of catching some that might be making their escape that way; and that he durst not put me into any of the hiding holes of his house, because they had been discovered; and consequently if any search should be made, they would certainly repair to these holes; and that therefore I had no other way of security but to go into his barn, and there lie behind his corn and hay. So, after he had given us some cold meat that was ready, we, without making any bustle in the house, went and lay in the barn all the next day; when, towards evening, his son—who had been a prisoner at Shrewsbury—an honest man, was released and came home to his father's house. And as soon as ever it began to be a little darkish, Mr. Woolfe and his son brought us meat into the barn; and there we discoursed with them whether we might safely get over the Severn into Wales; which they advised me by no means to adventure upon, because of the strict guards

that were kept all along the Severn, where any passage could be found, for preventing anybody's escaping that way into Wales.”

The King being dissuaded from his design of getting over the Severn into Wales, resolved on returning that night to Penderell's house. Accordingly he set out with Richard Penderell, and arrived at the house of one of Penderell's brothers—not far from White Ladys—who had been guide to Lord Wilmot. His Majesty inquired where his lordship was, when Penderell's brother told him he had conducted Lord Wilmot to the house of a very honest gentleman (Mr. Whitgrave), a Roman Catholic, not far from Wolverhampton. He also informed the King that there was then in the house one Major Careless, whom the King knowing, he having been a major in his army, a Roman Catholic, and made his escape thither, he sent for him into the room where he was, and consulting with him what they should do next day, he told his Majesty that it would be very dangerous for him either to stay in that house or go into the wood, there being a great wood hard by Boscobel; that he knew but one way how to pass the next day, which was to get up into a great oak, in a pretty plain place, where they might see around them, as the enemy would certainly search the wood for people that had made their escape. Of which proposition the King approving, he and Careless went, carrying some victuals for the whole day—viz., bread, cheese, small beer, and nothing else, and got up into a great oak that had been lopped some three or four years before, and being grown out again very bushy and thick, could not be seen through, where they stayed the whole day, during which they saw soldiers going up and down in the thicket of the wood, searching for persons escaped.

That night the King, accompanied by Richard Penderell, went to Mr. Whitgrave's, about six or seven miles off. Here he spoke with Lord Wilmot, and sent him away to Colonel Lane's, who lived at Bentley, about five or six miles from thence, to find what means could be found for his escaping towards London—who told my lord that he had a sister who had a very fair pretence for going near Bristol to a cousin of hers, married to one Mr. Norton, who lived two or three miles towards Bristol, on Somersetshire side, and she might carry the King

thither as her man, and from Bristol he might find shipping to get out of England.

The next night the King went to Colonel Lane's, where he changed his clothes into a little better habit, like a serving man, being a kind of grey cloth suit, and the next day the King and Mrs. Lane took their journey towards Bristol.

They had not gone two hours on their way but the mare the King rode cast a shoe; so they were forced to ride to get another shoe at a scattering village, and as his Majesty was holding his horse's foot he asked the smith what news, who told him there was no news that he knew of since the good news of the beating the rogues the Scots. The King asked him whether there were none of the English taken that had joined with the Scots. He answered that he did not hear that rogue Charles Stuart was taken—some of the others, he said, were taken, but not Charles Stuart. The King told him that if that rogue were taken he deserved to be hanged more than all the rest, for bringing in the Scots. Upon which the man told the King that he spoke like an honest man, and they parted.

When they arrived at Mr. Norton's house beyond Bristol, Mrs. Lane called the butler of the house, a very honest fellow, whose name was Pope, and had served Tom Jermin, a groom of the King's bed-chamber, when his Majesty was a boy at Richmond, and he had been a trooper in the army of Charles I.; she bade him take care of William Jackson (the name the King then went by, he still passing for Mrs. Lane's servant), as having lately been sick of an ague, whereof, she said, he was still weak. The King says he did look pale through his late fatigues and want of meat.

Pope, the butler, took great care of the King that night, he not eating as he should have done with the servants, upon account of his not being well.

The next morning the King arose pretty early, and went to the butlery hatch to get his breakfast, where he found Pope and two or three other men in the room, and they all fell to eating bread and butter, to which the butler gave them good ale and sack. While there, a country fellow sat just by the King, who gave so particular an account of the Battle of Worcester to the rest of the company, that Charles concluded he must have been one of Cromwell's soldiers; but on asking him how he came to give so good

an account of the battle, he found that he had been in Major Broughton's company in the King's regiment of guards.

"I asked him" (says the King in his account) "what kind of man I was? To which he answered by describing exactly both my clothes and my horse; and then looking upon me, he told me that the King was at least three fingers taller than me. Upon which I made what haste I could out of the butlery, for fear he should indeed know me.

"So Pope and I went into the hall; and, just as we came into it, Mrs. Norton was coming by through it, upon which, I plucking off my hat, and standing with my hat in my hand as she passed by, Pope looked very earnestly in my face. But I took no notice of it, put on my hat again, and went away, walking out of the house into the field."

It appeared that Pope recollected the King's person, which much alarmed his friends. However, his Majesty, on inquiry, finding that he was an honest fellow and fit to be confided in, thought it better to trust him; and thereupon sent for Pope, and told him that he was very glad to meet him there, and would trust him with his life as an old acquaintance. Pope, being a discreet fellow, asked the King what he intended to do; for that, though his master and mistress were good people, yet there were one or two great rogues in the house, and offered his service to execute any of his Majesty's commands.

The King told him his design of getting a ship, if possible, at Bristol; and bade him go that day immediately to Bristol to see if there were any ships going either to Spain or France.

Pope went to Bristol to inquire for a ship, but could hear of none ready to depart beyond sea sooner than a month. They then consulted what was to be done, and Pope told them that there lived somewhere upon the edge of Somersetshire, at Trent, Frank Windham, the knight marshal's brother, who being the King's old acquaintance and a very honest man, he resolved to go to his house.

Accordingly, next morning, the King and Mrs. Lane went directly to Trent to Frank Windham's house, and lay that night at Castle Cary. The next night they came to Trent, and met Lord Wilmot by appoint-

ment, when the King and his lordship consulted with Windham whether he had any acquaintance at any seaport on the coast of Dorset or Devonshire. He recommended them to Giles Strangways; but he could do nothing in the business. However, he sent the King 300 broad pieces, which were very necessary for him in the condition he was in.

Frank Windham went to Lyme, in Dorsetshire, and spoke with a merchant there to hire a ship, being forced to acquaint him that it was the King that was to be carried out. The merchant undertook it, and accordingly hired a vessel for France, appointing a day for his Majesty's coming to Lyme to embark, for which place his Majesty, &c., set out. But he was at length disappointed, the master of the ship, doubting that it was some dangerous employment, absolutely refused to carry the King and Lord Wilmot over. Another vessel was some time after engaged by Colonel Philips, who then lived at Salisbury; but she was afterwards pressed to transport soldiers to Jersey.

At length, however, Colonel Gunter acquainted the King that a ship was provided for him at Shoreham; whither he repaired, attended by Colonel Robert Philips, Lord Wilmot, and Colonel Gunter. When they arrived at Shoreham, the King and Lord Wilmot went aboard the ship, which was bound for Pool, laden with sea coal; but carried them before the harbour of Feschamp, from whence they went ashore in a cock-boat, stayed there all day to provide horses for Rouen, and the next day got to Rouen, where they stayed one day to provide themselves better clothes, and give notice to the Queen, his Majesty's mother, who was then at Paris, of his being safely landed; after which, setting out in a hired coach, he was met by his mother with coaches, short of Paris, and by her safely conducted thither.

OUR DAUGHTER PATTY.

CHAPTER II.

IT'S well I got my puddings done and out of the way that Saturday, for Elizabeth and Patty were that busy with their dresses and one thing and another that not a finger could they put to anything else till after the party was over. Indeed, Patty wheedled

me into helping them too, and there was such a sewing up of breadths, hemming of flounces, trying on and fixing of ribbons as never was. Elizabeth didn't mention again about the Wednesday evening service, but went to work with such a will, I couldn't help thinking she was nearly as pleased with the thoughts of the finery and bit of dancing as our Patty.

Wednesday came, and with it came the frost—a right down hard frost it was, too. I remember it well, for that very day Anne, our servant girl, went and shoved her hand right through the back kitchen window as she was trying to open it to let out the smell of some fat she'd burnt in the oven, and it was three weeks before ever we could get it mended, because it froze so hard the man said it would be useless to put it in. As I said to father at the time, "It's a very good job it wasn't one of the bed-room windows, or even the parlour"—I don't know whatever we should have done if it had been.

Well, I had a bit of fire lighted in the girls' room, it was so cold I recollect. Then we had an early cup of tea together—for they were to be there by seven—and after that came the dressing. That was a business indeed—Patty was so hard to please, she did her hair over twice before it would suit her.

There had come that afternoon a lovely white chrysanthemum and some fern leaves from Bob Brown for Patty, and very kind and friendly I thought it of Bob. But Patty said she wouldn't wear it; then she tried it in her hair, and it looked that nice she hadn't the heart to take it out again, so she left it there after all.

The last pin was stuck in at last, and I must say the dresses looked beautiful.

Of course it's not for me to make the remark, but any one else would have said the same—that our Patty looked a perfect picture, with her blue ribbons and fan and gloves, for she would have all complete; and Elizabeth didn't look amiss neither, in rose colour. The frocks were alike, with just the different ribbons, and then they came downstairs for father to see.

"By George, Patty!" he cried, as soon as he caught sight of her, "you're going to make a hole in somebody's heart to-night."

"I'm going to make two or three holes in two or three people's hearts," said my saucy Patty.

And then father turned to look at Elizabeth.

"Well, there'll be worse-looking girls in the room than ours, mother," he said, after he'd taken a good look.

There's no need for me to say I thought so too. But oh! how I wish you could have seen Patty yourselves.

Anne was ready waiting, and it was ten minutes past seven; so we pinned up their dresses, wrapped them up well, and packed them off.

Father and I sat down to a game of *béziq*ue. Many a time I lost my "double *béziq*ue" and broke into my "quint" thinking of how the girls were getting on. We gave it up at last, and I got father his glass of grog, and set the things ready and made some coffee for them, thinking it 'ud warm them a bit before going to bed.

It got on to twelve o'clock. I sent Anne to bring them home. Father fell fast asleep, and I think I must have gone off a bit myself, for all at once I was awakened by the knock at the door. I went to open it, and found Anne outside by herself. She said Mr. Bob Brown had sent her back, and said he'd see the young ladies safe home. It was much too early—they'd only just finished supper.

Of course Anne was full of the grand doings; she'd never seen such an upset in her life before. After I'd stayed talking to her a bit, I sent her to bed and went back to the parlour. Father was that sound asleep he'd never once awoke, and he was snoring awful.

I settled myself for a doze, and the next thing I remembered was a fearful noise, that seemed to be close to my ear. There was father rubbing his eyes.

"I say, mother, there they are. What a row they are making, to be sure."

He might well say that; they were thumping and shaking the door fit to bring it down.

I ran to let them in. Bob Brown was standing on the steps with his hand up, just ready to begin knocking again.

"Oh! how d'ye do, Mrs. Gibson? Been asleep? I hope we've not frightened you. Couldn't make any one hear," said he, shaking hands with me.

"I'm sorry we've kept you so late, mother," said Elizabeth, coming in. "We've had such a pleasant evening."

And then I saw Patty standing at the

foot of the steps talking to a tall young man.

I was telling Bob I hoped his mother wouldn't be very much put about with all this fuss to-morrow.

The young man seemed to be asking Patty for something, and she didn't seem to want to give it him. At last I saw her raise her hand and pull out the flower from her hair. He took it, and, if my eyes didn't deceive me, he kissed it, and said something that made Patty laugh. I called out—

"Come, come, Patty; don't stand out there in the cold."

Then there was a shaking of hands all round, and Patty ran in. The young man called after her—

"Mind you don't forget to-morrow, Miss Patty."

And Patty called back—

"I'm not likely to, Mr. Darrel."

When we got into the parlour Patty threw herself into a chair.

"Oh, we have had such fun," she cried. "I never enjoyed myself so much in my life."

"Well, and who was there? Come, tell us all about it," said father.

Patty rattled away while I poured out the coffee, and Elizabeth told me what they had for supper, what every one did, and what they had on. By the way, Mrs. Brown did wear her puce satin. I said she would.

I was just telling Elizabeth how in my young days girls would no more have thought of waltzing, no, nor of polking neither, than of flying, when I overheard Patty say—

"And then Mr. Canter came in after church; and oh, papa, you should have seen Miss Slyboots there flirting away with him."

"It's good to hear you talking of flirting, after the way you were carrying on with that young Mr. Darrel," said Elizabeth.

"Now we shall have it all. Fire away, Liz," cried father.

"Who's Mr. Darrel?" said I. For it just struck me that was the very name of the young man that had brought Patty home.

"Oh, he's one of Bob Brown's grand London friends, come down to stop with them a bit. Such a jolly fellow; dances splendidly," said Patty.

"Do you know, ma, she actually danced three times running with him. Even Mr. Canter remarked upon it," said Elizabeth.

"He'll have something more to remark upon to-morrow, for Emmy and he are coming to call for me. Mr. Darrel's going to teach me to skate, mamma."

"To what?" cried I. "Skate! My gracious, what ever will the girls be up to next, I wonder. When I was young—"

But Patty interrupted me.

"Why, ma, wherever's the harm? Mr. Darrel says it's quite the fashion. All the first ladies in the land skate. Emmy's learnt; and, after all, isn't physical exercise good for one every way?"

"Well, I never!" said Elizabeth, and I could see she was quite shocked; and for the matter of that, so was I.

"Upon my word," I said, "I don't know what the world's coming to. I expect, father, the next thing they'll be for figuring away on those bicycle things, and calling it physical exercise. I can tell you this, Patty, it won't be of my free will you go making a show of yourself on the ice."

"A very nice figure you'll cut there. It'll be one person's work to pick you up again each time you tumble," said father. "But come along, lassies—it's after two o'clock, let's get to bed. Don't look so glum, Patty, my girl; me and the missis 'll sleep on it, and may be you'll be able to distinguish yourself after all. But where are the skates coming from?"

"Oh, Emmy's going to manage all that," answered Patty.

So we did talk it all over, and next morning Patty coaxed.

Then Emmy and Mr. Darrel came—such a nice-spoken, gentlemanly young man I thought him. When he came to talk and tell me how his sister skated, and all the quality, I began to think that perhaps it was as he said—only prejudice, and I'd soon get used to the notion.

Well, Patty went, and Mr. Darrel told me not to make myself uneasy; he'd see no harm came to her.

After that we heard nothing but what fun it was, and what tumbles she'd had; and each day they came for her, and Patty could talk of nothing else but skating, and outside edges, and such-like.

Elizabeth often had words with Patty about it, and sometimes I had my own misgivings; but the child seemed so happy, I hadn't the heart to stop it.

At first Mr. Darrel's name was never off Patty's lips. It was always Mr. Darrel says

this, and Mr. Darrel says that; but afterwards I noticed that she hardly ever spoke of him, and from being so merry and light-hearted she would sometimes sit for ever so long doing nothing—only thinking; then, all at once begin laughing and chattering and dancing about the house, gay as any bird.

I said nothing, but perhaps thought the more.

Father said he "smelt a rat;" and I suppose he meant Mr. Darrel, for he used to tease Patty about him above a bit.

We heard somehow that Mr. Darrel was an architect: he'd been pupil to some one, I forget the name, but I think it began with an H. However, that's neither here nor there. I believe he was just about to begin business on his own account in London. A fine thing I thought it for Patty to have attentions paid her by a real gentleman such as he.

A SPECULATION IN CORN.

MY friend Flukes is said to be one of the wealthiest shipowners in Britain, and therefore in the world. He and I were boys together in the same office. We lodged together, sharing the same room; and besides the fifteen shillings which we jointly earned each week, we had no money, and no one to assist us. My name is Brown, and I am, or rather was, a corn merchant. I have often wondered if our names have anything to do with the very different success which has attended us through life. In my opinion, there is no business or profession in which a man's name has not a great deal to do with his prosperity. It is impossible that any man of the name of Brown can have the same self-reliance as one who is called Flukes. Times innumerable, from a natural timidity which I associate with my name, I have not placed my money in speculations and investments which turned out prosperous, whereas, had my name been Flukes, or any other equally inspiring, I should certainly have risked my capital. Even in the literary profession, of which I know nothing, I question if the editor of a magazine would pay the same attention to an article signed Brown as he would to one signed Flukes, supposing both writers to be unknown to him.

Of course this must be a matter of opinion, but I cannot get rid of the idea that our

names are the principal cause why I was never able to do more than provide comfortably for my family, while my friend is a millionaire. There is only one thing in life which has not turned out as Flukes wished it, and that is his only son Bob. This young man is one of the steadiest and best-tempered fellows you could find anywhere; but, unfortunately, he is not fitted for business. It was with great difficulty he was taught to read, and writing and arithmetic no one has yet been able to teach him. He knows something of all these three branches of knowledge, but only something, not much. And yet, to talk to him, he seems a sensible enough fellow, and can give a fair opinion on many subjects; but in all business matters he is wholly at sea. This was a great grief to his father, who had calculated the fortune Bob would make, taking into account the advantages he would start with compared with his own. About six years ago, when I was still in business, Flukes called at my office one day.

"Bob is twenty-three," he said, "and it is time he was learning something of business, and I find he does not get on in my own office at all. The clerks don't regard him as one of themselves, so that he is in rather an anomalous position, and I wish to see if you will take him."

"I shall be very willing," I replied.

"I think, too," he said, "if you would put his name after yours in the firm, it might give him more interest in his work. At all events, it could do you no harm, and I do not expect you even to give him a salary."

To this I also readily assented. Flukes put a lot of business into my hands, and I knew that he could do more in this way if he chose, so that I was certain I could be no loser by doing as he wished. Besides this, I had another reason, and the reader may smile at my weakness. "Brown and Flukes" had charms for my ears, which will be understood from what I have already said.

"One thing I wish to say before leaving," said Flukes. "You are to trust him in no business transaction, nor will I be responsible for anything that turns up if you do."

I replied that I would not, and he thanked me, and left.

I found Bob of considerable use to me, not indeed in the office work, but in taking orders; and I began to think that his father had underrated his business qualifications.

One circumstance, however, which arose from his name appearing in the firm, caused me great annoyance. It was currently reported that Flukes had placed a large amount of capital in my business, on consideration of my taking his son into partnership. A friend in the corn trade, talking to me one day of this rumour, said he had heard the sum stated at a hundred thousand pounds, and that he had even heard that Flukes himself was going to take an active part in my business.

"Your fortune is made," said another. "Flukes never yet put his money into any concern that did not prosper."

It was in vain that I protested, and told them that my business was still on its old footing.

"Business is business," was the common answer. "Of course you did not take young Flukes into partnership for nothing; and of course we do not expect you to tell us how much he brought with him."

From whatever cause it arose, I soon perceived that my position on the Corn Exchange was very different from what it had been. I was regarded there as a person of no ordinary importance, and considerable surprise was expressed that my dealings were conducted on the same scale as formerly.

My wife became rather unwell; and, trade not being very brisk at the time, I accompanied her on a visit to her father, who lives at a quiet place in Yorkshire. I only intended to be away from London for a few days, and I told my senior clerk that he could leave for his holidays on the day I expected to return. I stayed longer than this, however; and, as I had an order becoming due, I wrote—there were no post-office telegrams in those days—to Bob, telling him to buy at once 1,000 qrs. of wheat. It is impossible that he can make any mistake about that, I thought.

I stayed in Yorkshire another week, as my wife had become seriously ill; but, on her recovering a little, I left for London to look after my business.

On my way to my office, I met a corn merchant

"Flukes is making himself manifest at last," he said.

"How?" I said, not having the slightest idea of what he meant.

"Why, buying up all the wheat in the market, of course."

I knew something must be wrong, and

did not stay to question him, but rushed for my office.

Bob came to me smiling.

"I haven't got it all bought yet," he said. "I'm told there is not so much in the market. I've done pretty well, however, for I've got more than half of it."

"Half of what?" I said, and I trembled for his answer.

"Why, the million quarters," he replied.

I sank down on a chair, speechless. I soon learned the extent of my misfortune. Bob, from his deficient knowledge of reading and arithmetic, had thought that the 1,000 qrs. in my letter was a million; and had, during the last six days, gone about buying up all the wheat in the market. The wheat was falling every day, and was not expected to rise for months, so that I should be irretrievably ruined. I got my letter from him, and went to his father.

"Do you remember the last words I said to you about Bob, when I spoke to you about taking him?" he asked.

Of course, I made no reply to this question.

"The thing is as clear as a full moon," he said, looking at my letter. "Bob has taken the qrs. in your letter for three o's; and, from your bad writing and his bad reading, I cannot understand how you could ever have expected anything else to take place."

"Can you do nothing for me?" I asked.

"Nothing," he replied. "After the caution I gave you about my son, I am not in the least responsible for him. My advice is that you hand over your affairs to your solicitor."

I went and saw my solicitor, and told him I was insolvent, and that he was to look after my affairs, and send for me when I was wanted; and then I left for Yorkshire. I was in a fearful state of depression, and did not even dare to tell my wife, who was now slowly recovering. I looked at no newspapers, for fear I should read there an account of my disaster. In about a week I had a letter from my senior clerk, who had returned, saying that I was to come to London at once. I went, on arriving, directly to my office, but with very different feelings from any I ever before had in going there. I had no sooner entered than my clerk came forward and shook me by the hand most enthusiastically, while joy beamed in his face. I looked at him in astonishment.

"Is it possible you don't know the state of the market?" he asked.

"I have not seen a paper for a week," I replied.

"Prospect of failure of crops in America! Wheat up five shillings, and rising every day!" he shouted.

I could scarcely believe my good fortune.

"We must sell immediately," I said.

"I think," he said, "when you have heard how things are going that you'll wait."

But I did not wait; and before many days had passed, on every one of which the market was rising, I had sold every quarter that Bob had bought. I cleared upwards of a hundred thousand pounds by the transaction, and retired from business the next week. There was one man who was, I believe, more pleased about this strange speculation than myself, and that was Flukes. Bob was reinstated in his father's office. It was at that time that the famous firm of Flukes and Co. became Flukes and Son. I was dining with some business men shortly afterwards at his house. At dinner Bob said some very amusing but silly thing.

"Ha! ha!" laughed Flukes. "Bob's fond of a joke, gentlemen. He has made more money already than his father did when he was ten years older; only," and he winked in my direction, and stroked his chin with a self-satisfied air, "he did not make it for himself, like me."

"I may yet, though, father," said Bob.

"Yes, you may," said Flukes; "for believe me, gentlemen, a talent for speculation runs in our family."

A LAWYER'S BILL.

WHEN the House of Commons, in session 1787-8, impeached Mr. Warren Hastings for his alleged malpractices with regard to the administration of Indian affairs, he instructed two friends, Mr. Law and Mr. Dallas, to wait upon his solicitor, a Mr. Richard Shawe, to request him to take the management of his defence to the impeachment of the Commons. Mr. Shawe was at first disinclined to undertake so heavy a responsibility; but, upon the urgent entreaties of Mr. Hastings's friends, he ultimately consented, upon the express understanding that, looking at the possible magnitude of the inquiry, and that the whole of his time would be necessarily occupied, his remuneration should be proportionate. Ne-

cessarily Mr. Shawe was a stranger to the crucial facts of his client's case, and he seems to have proceeded methodically to acquire information. From the 24th to the 31st December, 1787, consecutively, he appears to have read night and day documents bearing upon the question, frequently being greatly in want of reports of the different committees; and he was so engaged up to the 13th January, 1788, when there occurs a note "that he was employed in the same manner at every convenient interval for several months." The date of the first visit of Mr. Law and Mr. Dallas to Mr. Shawe was the 23rd December, 1787; and up to the 13th January, 1788, the charges amount to thirteen guineas; but the next item is a charge of £814 10s. for the preparation of briefs for the defence on the fourth article of impeachment, consisting of five distinct charges—viz., the opium contract, the bullock contract, Auriol's agency, Sir Eyre Coote's allowance, Ballis's agency, and also on the sixth article, comprising a great number of different subjects, the whole forming a mass of 1,629 brief sheets. The fees paid to counsel on this preliminary occasion were, including consultations, as follows:—To Mr. Law, £420; and to his clerk, £14 3s. 6d.; to Mr. Plumer and his clerk, £443 2s.; and to Mr. Dallas and his clerk, £443 2s.

A difficulty appears to have arisen in securing a shorthand writer to act for the defence; for we find on the 8th January, 1788, Mr. Hastings's solicitor waiting upon Mr. Gurney to endeavour to prevail upon him to act as well for the defence as for the Commons; but he answered that he could not do it without the consent of the solicitors for the prosecution; and, after several attempts, it was intimated that the managers would not consent to Mr. Gurney being employed on both sides. Two shorthand writers named Hodgson and Blanchard, however, offering their services, the choice devolved on the former. The whole of the 11th and 12th of February appear to have been occupied in preparations for the convenience of parties interested in the forthcoming impeachment, in obtaining and distributing the pass tickets issued by Sir Peter Burrell, securing rooms in the house for depositing papers, and in attending at the various coffee houses to engage rooms for the private use of Mr. Hastings, and his friends and witnesses.

For the preparation of briefs on the seventh

to the twentieth articles, forming twenty-three volumes of briefs, in all 2,669 brief sheets, the charge is £1,334 10s., and for four copies £2,669. The fees to counsel, with this mass, were—to Mr. Law £630, and his clerk £10 10s.; to Mr. Plumer and his clerk, £651; and a like fee to Mr. Dallas.

So various were the witnesses, and so great the difficulty of obtaining evidence which could be reduced to a working compass, that on the 10th of March Mr. Hastings expressed a wish that a regular mode of meeting might be fixed at the house of his solicitor, for the gentlemen who were particularly conversant with the business to attend and give such information as they were able; and accordingly a circular letter was written, by which a regular committee-day was appointed for the despatch of the business. During the progress of the impeachment this committee met fourteen times. There is a charge of £666 for examining all the speeches made in both Houses of Parliament for and against, and abstracting the substance of them, and a charge of £1,221 for the preparation and copying in alphabetical order of a general index to all the subjects at this time collected, bearing upon the impeachment. Counsels' fees for thirty-five days' attendance in court in this session amounted to £2,334 13s. 6d.; and miscellaneous charges, such as shorthand writers' fees, copies of speeches, coach hire, bookbinding, &c., &c., £736 5s. 10d. In the recess of Parliament 1788 charges appear, amounting to £1,221 0s. 6d., principally composed of charges for perusing papers, drawing complete indexes, and arranging documents in alphabetical order, including an elaborate index of dates. The proceedings having, at the opening of session 1788-9, been fairly launched, we shall content ourselves with summarizing the cost of the defence to this famous impeachment, session by session, until its conclusion, which was as follows:—Session 1788-9, £6,298 4s. 6d.; for the recess, 1789-90, £3,694 3s. 2d.; session 1790, commencing on the 16th February, £2,939 5s.; and for the recess, £570 8s. For the recess of 1790-1, £1,354 19s. 2d.; and £3,790 10s. 8d. for the recess of 1791-2. For the session 1792, £2,901 17s. 10d.; between the 8th July, 1792, and 25th March, 1793, being the recess of 1792 and part of the session of

1793, £5,665 7s. 4d.; whilst for the remainder of that session and the succeeding recess, which brings the date up to 21st January, 1794, a further cost of £6,010 14s. 4d. had been incurred. At the opening of the session of 1794, Lord Loughborough moved in the House of Lords to postpone the hearing of the trial to a future day; but we find a charge in Mr. Hastings's adviser's bill for attending the House of Commons on the 6th of February, upon Mr. Wigley's motion to expedite the trial, in itself sufficient evidence of the wish of Mr. Hastings to have done with the business, which, as is matter of historical fact, was closed in that session. The amount of costs incurred this session appears to have been £2,797 10s.; but from a note it appears that counsel and solicitor declined receiving any fees for their labours during that session. The total cost of the defence to the impeachment amounted to £58,013 17s. 10d., of which Mr. Hastings paid on account £56,080, leaving a balance due from him of £1,933 17s. 10d. Some portion of the sum paid on account was secured by a bond for £40,000, which bore interest; but the balance, and all questions of a monetary character between lawyer and client, are disposed of by the following note, in the handwriting of this fine old practitioner, who had worked so well and successfully for his client, bearing date the 24th May, 1796. He is alluding to the £1,933 17s. 10d.:—"Released him from this balance, and also all interest, amounting together to £14,400, in consideration of his disappointment in his application to the India Company to pay his expenses."

THE GHOST IN THE SNOW.

CHAPTER II.

THE SNOWSTORM IN THE BACKWOODS.

THE stranger was still speaking when he drew up, and sprang from his sleigh, opposite our tent.

He was a young, fair-haired, fresh-coloured, gentlemanly-looking fellow, with a frank, open expression of countenance that served in itself as a letter of introduction.

Of course, we gave him a hearty welcome, and invited him to join us at our breakfast table.

"Thank you," he replied. "I'm as hungry as a hunter, and I've a long day's journey yet before me. Stay, though, I'll

bring in my gun. I never care to leave that behind me in the sleigh when I stop;" and from beneath the buffalo robes he drew forth a handsome double-barrelled fowling-piece, and brought it into the tent with him.

Then, while he was divesting himself of the sealskin cloak in which he was wrapped, and of his otter-skin cap, and gauntlets of the same costly fur, which he wore drawn up to his elbows, he informed us that he was an officer—a lieutenant—belonging to the regiment stationed at Toronto.

"A party of our fellows," he continued, "together with two or three men belonging to the town, have gone on a hunting expedition to the Cedar Lake. They set out a week ago. I was to have been of the party; but I was detained four or five days on garrison duty, confound it! Now I'm going to join them. I expect to reach their camp before nightfall, or else I shall have to 'camp down' in the sleigh as best I may, unless I'm lucky enough to fall in with some hunter's cabin. However, I'm told it's only twenty-five miles to their camp from Lake Simcoe, and my pony's fresh. I dare say it 'll be all right."

We acquainted the young officer that we were about to set out for Lake Nepissing, and Markham observed that for four or five miles we might travel in company.

"Be it so," said the lieutenant, whose name, as he informed us, was Hoptown. "But I branch off a few miles ahead, to the north-east, and your course lies due north-west, if I recollect the map aright. I travel by pocket compass," he added, laughing merrily; "and, as you perceive, I've been studying the courses over this waste of frozen snow, as carefully as a sailor does when he's navigating the ocean."

I inquired whether he had journeyed by himself all the way from Toronto.

"Every inch of the road," he replied. "You know, I might have travelled by rail from Toronto to Guelph, but I preferred to sleigh it. A sleigh, in my opinion, is so much pleasanter a conveyance than a cooped-up railway carriage."

We set forth immediately after breakfast, and kept together for about four miles, when our young friend cheerfully bade us good-bye, and set forth on his due north-east course.

We had nothing to guide us on our journey. The road, if it may be so termed, lay through a wide clearing in the

forest. The trees grew thickly on each side of the clearing, which displayed a wide surface of hard-frozen, dazzlingly white snow, amidst which, here and there, the black, charred stump of a tree (burnt, in order to destroy the roots, that they might rot in the ground) rose to the height of two or three feet, looking intensely black, dismal, and unsightly, in contrast with the pure white snow.

There was really no more perceptible road or path than is visible on the wide expanse of the Atlantic or Pacific oceans; and, as the young officer had intimated, we were guided on our path, like mariners, by the aid of the compass, or the position of the sun in the heavens. Our young friend was soon lost to view as we diverged more and more widely apart from each other, though his sleigh bells were still audible through the pure, clear, frosty atmosphere, when the sleigh itself was no longer to be seen.

"Now that is what I like to see," said Markham, when the officer's cariole was lost to sight behind the forest trees. "There goes a young fellow, travelling fearlessly over a tract that lies beyond the limits of civilization, and in a direction that would carry him to the North Pole—if he kept on long enough—without his meeting, in all probability, with a solitary habitation or a single human being throughout the journey; trusting confidently to his own courage and resources, and as certain in his own mind of reaching his destination in safety as though he were travelling over a turnpike road at home. Where will you see any other than an Englishman venturing alone on such a journey? A Frenchman, or a Spaniard, or German would have a companion with him, at least. Other people may be as brave as we Britons. I don't say they are not. But there are no other people upon earth so ready cheerfully to trust to their own resources, and even to feel a delight in meeting with and overcoming difficulties and dangers—Hullo! What is the meaning of this?" he suddenly exclaimed, breaking off from his eulogy of his own countrymen. "Look ahead, my dear fellow. Did you ever see the like? After such a promising morning, too!"

I looked ahead in the direction to which he pointed—due north; and though I saw nothing that to my less experienced eyes appeared to be very alarming, I perceived

that a mass of dense black clouds was rising in the distant horizon, and threatening speedily to obscure the surrounding azure sky.

"We're going to have a snowstorm, and a severe one too," continued my companion, "or I'm no judge of the signs of the weather in this country. However, let us push on. I won't turn back before we have reached the end of our journey, if I can help it. I hate to be baulked of anything I've set my mind upon doing. The cloud appears stationary now. Possibly the storm may not reach us, after all, until the sun has passed the meridian; and in that case we shall have it on our backs in returning to the camp.

"I hope, though," he went on, after a brief pause, "that that young fellow who has just parted from us will take warning in time, and return to the camp. There is not even an Indian village on the route he is travelling; and if he gets caught in the storm, he has much less experience of Canadian winter weather than I have had. In fact, his regiment only came out last spring, and he's never yet passed a winter in Canada. He cannot possibly reach the Cedar Lake before the storm comes on, and if he gets caught in it I wouldn't give much for his chance of life; but you'll see, he won't turn back—not he—he'll just go on his way glorying in his contention with the warring elements, until it is too late to retreat."

There really did appear some prospect of the storm's holding back until the sun should begin to decline. The clouds, which had risen rapidly at first, appeared to be arrested in their further progress. The atmosphere was still calm, and the sky overhead continued perfectly clear.

"Let us push on," cried Markham. "It sha'n't be said that we were driven back before we reached the end of our journey, if I can prevent it, though we shall have but little time to look about us before we must return. Gee-ho! Well done, Cato! How he goes ahead—don't he—as if he knew our purpose;" and the hardy, spirited little pony did certainly dash along, over the hard-frozen snow, at a pace that would have done honour to a well-contested trotting match.

We had passed over several miles of ground, and a deep forest was before us, through which lay our path to the lake. In fact, we had nearly reached the forest when a sudden gust of wind nearly overset the

sleigh; and the clouds, black as jet and rolling one over another, rose rapidly ahead. A few large flakes of snow fell around, as *avant-coureurs* of the coming storm. Then came another heavy gust of wind, and the sky became suddenly obscured, as if by the effects of magic. There was a shuddering sound in the air, as though nature were trembling before the threatened tempest; and then, with a roar like thunder, the winds were let loose. The snow fell thick and fast, and was blown up in showers around us, almost blinding our eyes, and preventing us from seeing twenty yards ahead. The whole surface of the earth appeared to be in swift motion in the drifting snow—one might have fancied that we were amidst the foaming waves of the ocean—and the trees near us bent as though they would snap asunder beneath the fury of the blasts.

"Now for it," cried Markham. "We've got it in right good earnest. I did not expect it would come down upon us so suddenly. Good heavens! how the wind howls. We must reach the forest if we can, and find shelter while the storm is in its first fury. This cannot last long!"

With no little difficulty—for the wind, every now and then, caught the sleigh on one side or the other, and arrested its progress, threatening to upset both the vehicle and the pony together; and the blasts were so severe that, for the moment, they took away our breath—we at length gained the slight shelter of the forest, and drew up, in the hope that the first fury of the tempest would soon abate, and permit us to return, for we now gave up all hope of reaching the lake.

It was scarcely yet mid-day, though the dense pall of black clouds overhead rendered it almost as dark as night, and it was impossible for the keenest sight to penetrate the thick falling snow. The forest looked gloomy in the extreme; though the tall pine trees, rising within a few yards of each other, branchless to the height of twenty feet, preserved us from a peril sometimes to be dreaded, under similar circumstances, in a forest of deciduous trees, in which the frequent sudden fall of an aged trunk, borne down by the fury of the tempest, crushes everything beneath it as it comes, with a thundering crash, to the ground. Still, we were not altogether free from danger of this description, as we could discover from the frequent crash and fall of

heavy, lofty, rotten branches, that were caught by the wind.

It would, however, have been impossible to have made headway even before the storm, while the wind blew with such fury. Like a ship at sea, which dares not run before a violent gale for fear of being "pooped" by the waves, our sleigh would certainly have been blown over, unless we could have kept it directly before the wind, which would have been a most difficult and hopeless task. We therefore remained where we were.

A snowstorm in Canada is very different from a storm of the same kind in a milder climate. The snow does not fall in large, feathery flakes, floating slowly and gracefully to the ground, but in dense, minute particles, mingled with hail and sleet, which, when driven before a violent wind, prick the skin as with needles wherever it is exposed, blinding the eyes, and penetrating into every aperture in the dress. The traveller exposed to such a storm, in a country where there is no road, nor even the faintest track to guide his steps, is unable to keep the direction of his journey; and if, as in many parts of the far West, there is no shelter within many miles, his senses soon become bewildered; and if darkness overtake him, he has little chance of living through the night. The daylight too often finds him a frozen corpse, half-buried in the snow.

We remained in the sleigh (curled up beneath the buffalo robes, one of which we had thrown over our pony, which stood trembling with cold and fright) full two hours before the storm abated anything of its fury. At length the wind somewhat lessened, though it still blew violently.

"We must start now," said Markham, "or we shall have night upon us before we can reach any shelter. The half-breed village must be near this spot. If we can find that, we shall be safe. Otherwise, we must strive our utmost to get back to the camp."

In a few minutes we were again in motion. The gale still howled, raged, and roared with all the fury of a hurricane, and the snow still fell thick and fast. But there were occasional short lulls between the gusts of wind, which led us to hope that the force of the tempest was breaking. The wind was from the northward, and so far in our favour, as we calculated, that the camp lay very nearly due south from

the spot where we were. We judged, therefore, that we had but to keep the wind directly on our backs to steer a true course.

We accordingly set forth on our homeward journey, and, as we thought, made pretty good way, although we could not see twenty yards before us, when we were suddenly brought to a standstill by finding our further progress intercepted by a long line of forest, where we had expected to find open ground; while, to add to our distress, the short Canadian winter day was already drawing to a close, and darkness was coming on apace.

"Hallo!" cried Markham, "there's something wrong here. We've got out of our course somehow, and yet we've kept straight before the wind all the way."

We had a pocket compass with us—an instrument without which no one ventures to travel over unknown ground, in the backwoods of America. But, in order to set the compass, it is necessary to come to a standstill; and as this causes delay, we had disregarded it hitherto. Now, however, we were necessarily delayed; and, by the feeble light which yet remained, we set the compass, and found that, instead of heading to the south, as we expected, we had been travelling in a south-easterly direction.

"The wind must have changed to the north-west since we quitted our shelter," I remarked; but while we were still examining the compass, a heavy gust of wind came suddenly from the north-east, and shifted round almost to due east, and back again to north-west, ere it had hardly spent its force.

"I see how it is," said Markham. "Like fools, we've kept before the wind; and it's been shifting to and fro, all the while, from east to north-west, almost half round the compass—and we, of course, have kept continually changing our direction. Heaven knows where we've got to, and in another half-hour it will be pitch dark. Would to God we could fall in with the half-breed village, though I'm afraid we've passed it, long ago. If we could but see the lights from the cabins, I'd try to get back to it, in the teeth of the wind," he added, in a tone of voice that told how little hope he had of getting back to the camp, or of weathering through the night, without shelter.

We again put the sleigh in motion, and skirted along the edge of the forest, for at

least three miles, before we found an opening, and by this time it was almost perfectly dark.

However, the tempest had somewhat abated, and we carefully set the compass again, directed our course by it, and set off in a due south direction, only to find ourselves brought up, in less than half an hour, by another belt of forest.

The trees, however, grew pretty open, and we decided to try to force a path through the forest, rather than skirt it, we knew not for how great a distance, in a direction contrary to that in which we wished to proceed; but we had scarcely entered the forest when something loomed up before us amid the darkness, darker still, which something we soon discovered, to our great joy—for by this time we were almost benumbed by the intense cold—to be a large, though apparently dilapidated and deserted, dwelling-house.

"Thank Heaven! We'll find shelter here, at least," exclaimed Markham. "To tell you the truth," he added, "though I kept silent, I had almost begun to despair."

We drove up to the house, and shouted to discover whether it was inhabited or not, but we received no response to our cries.

"By the size of the place," said Markham, "it must be, I should imagine, one of the old deserted stations of the Nor'-west Fur Company. And now I think of it, I recollect to have heard that there was some such place back, northward from the camp. It has the reputation of being haunted, too, if I mistake not," he went on, with a smile; "but that reputation belongs to all these old places, and I dare say we shall find our shelter none the worse for it. I suspect that the evil spirits are chiefly owls, and bats, and rats, and such-like vermin."

We alighted from the sleigh, and, with some slight difficulty, amid the darkness, found what appeared to be the main entrance to the forsaken dwelling.

We ascended a short flight of crazy steps, formed apparently of loose stones, and found the door half open, and hanging by one hinge.

We had matches with us, and our first operation was to strike a light, and set fire to a splinter of the turpentine-fir, which blazed in half a minute, like a torch. We now perceived that we were in a large room, with a lofty ceiling of rafters, black with smoke and age.

There was no furniture of any kind in the room, save an iron pot, which still hung suspended over the ample hearth, beneath the wide chimney; but it was almost eaten through with rust, showing that it must have hung thus suspended for years. There was one large window, with heavy shutters. The window had once been glazed, but only a few triangular pieces of glass remained in the corners of the panes.

Our first care was to close the shutters, which were still in tolerably good condition, for the gusts of wind came in at the window in such force as almost to extinguish our torch. This done, we looked further around us. There was, however, little to see. In one corner of the vast apartment was a dilapidated wooden staircase, which led to the rooms above; but several of the stairs had altogether given way; and satisfied that the house was uninhabited, we did not, for the present, attempt to ascend the stairs. On one side of the room, there was also a range of deep shelves; but most of them had rotted from their fastenings, and fallen to the floor. The floor itself was boarded; but many of the boards were rotten, and it was necessary to be careful how we stepped, to avoid falling through in places where they had given way, and thus breaking our legs. Round about the hearth, however, which was formed of smooth, flat stones, the floor was still in pretty good condition.

Having satisfied our curiosity thus far, we brought in the buffalo robes from the sleigh, and unharnessing the pony, led him carefully up the steps into the house, and placed him in a corner, with the bag of oats and hay we had brought with us over his nose, and there left him to rest and feed.

Our next care was to light a fire, a matter of no great difficulty, for the broken stairs and shelves were as dry as tinder, and served admirably for firewood; and, moreover, there was an abundance of pine branches and splinters, blown down by the gale, which served us both for light and firing.

In half an hour we had made ourselves as comfortable as it was possible to be in such a place; and we then proceeded to spread forth the provisions we had brought with us in the sleigh, and to make ourselves some tea, by means of the coffee-warmer we had with us—melted snow serving in place of water. We had refrained from even tasting

the brandy until we found shelter, lest it should increase the feeling of torpidity caused by the intense cold; but we each swallowed a dram after we entered the house, and we now added a little more to our hot tea; and making a hearty meal of biscuit and salt pork—for the cold had sharpened our appetites—we began to feel tolerably comfortable, and to think of other things besides our own immediate requirements.

I expressed a hope that the young officer, from whom we had parted a few hours before, had reached his friends, or found some shelter from the storm.

"I fear not, poor fellow!" replied Markham. "As to reaching the Cedar Lake, in the face of such a storm, that is impossible; and I very much doubt if there is any shelter of any kind between here and the lake. If there should be a deserted hut, the chances are a hundred to one against his finding it. I fear," he added, with a shake of his head, "that we shall hear sad accounts of him."

"I wonder," he went on, after a pause, "how they get along at the camp. By George! if they got the storm as sudden and heavy as we had it, it must have levelled the tents to the earth before they knew what was the matter—"

"Hallo! What's that?"

This sudden interjection on Markham's part was occasioned by a strange, whirring, humming noise amongst the rafters above our heads; and the next moment, first one, then a second large bat, wakened from their winter torpor by the heat, and light, and smoke, fell headlong to the hearth, almost into the fire.

"A specimen of the ghosts which haunt these old, deserted houses," observed Markham, with a smile. "It's really annoying, though, to have the vermin tumbling about us in this fashion."

We now lit our pipes, having satisfied our hunger, and were preparing to arrange the buffalo robes in the most comfortable manner for our repose, when I suggested that, before we settled ourselves down for the night, we should, just for curiosity's sake, take a peep at the rooms upstairs.

Markham assented. And providing ourselves each with a fresh pine torch, we set forth on our survey of the forsaken dwelling.

TABLE TALK.

A RATHER comical notice, through a misprint, appears in one of the weekly papers, under the heading of "Books Received"—namely, "A Whaling Cruise to Biffin's Bay and the Gulf of Boothia. By Albert Hastings Markham, F.R.G.S." One is tempted to ask whether the Geographical Society has at last discovered the site of the Garden of Eden. Surely Biffin's Bay sounds as likely a spot as any for the growth of the apple "whose mortal taste brought death into the world and all our woe."

LADIES OF THE Malaprop order are not extinct, as will be seen from the following, which occurred a few days since, respecting the change about to take place in Leicester-square. The lady speaker was, in spite of her words, decidedly a loyal subject of the Queen; but she has her views on things in general. "Well," she said, "of course it's a matter of taste, but I don't approve of it. It's carried to too great an extent. The Albert Memorial is only just finished. Not a fortnight has passed since the Albert statue was unveiled on the Viaduct; and now, when at last something is to be done for dreary old Leicester-square, it is to have an Albert Grant. I think it is time to stop." So did the listeners.

MR. SMITH'S mother-in-law still continues to make remarks upon household matters, *chez* the husband of her daughter, and also comments upon the news she reads in the morning papers. Her last announcement is that she sees the Pope's bull is loose again. "And I'm not surprised either, seeing what an objection the savage brutes have to colour; for not content with wearing scarlet petticoats himself, and giving scarlet hats to his cardinals, he actually persists in keeping that abominable scarlet woman on the premises, who has been denounced by the clergy ever since I was a girl." Smith says, "That wasn't yesterday!"

A FEW WORDS on tram travelling. Until we grow, under the Education Act, as polite as the French, it is impossible to expect people to make room for a new-comer who has paid, or is about to pay, for his or her share of a ride. The companies will not make proper divisions along the seats,

which would be the real solution of the difficulty. May we then not call upon them to instruct their conductors to see that there is place made for those who enter the conveyance? The rule is, when there are eight passengers on each side, for the next who comes in to be left standing in the straw: every one of the seat-occupiers politely refusing to budge an inch.

THERE IS AN old story told of a couple of rural shoemakers, one of whom stuck up in his window the Latin motto—"Mens Conscia Recti." Not to be outdone, his rival came out a few days after with a bigger notice, "Men's and Women's Conscia Recti." If that was not true, it was *ben trovato*. But to-day we have a pair of enterprising tailors, one advertising "*Standard* trousers," and setting off his rival to imitate, after the fashion of the shoemaker of the anecdote, with ready-made continuations dubbed, in great letters, "*Telegraph* trousers." Where is the clever tailor who will now start pantaloons that are *Daily New* (without the *s*), and others suitable for the *Hour* and the *Times*?

HERE IS AN extract from the election news in the *Daily Telegraph*:—"Mr. Abel Smith (Conservative), in a further address, wishes all classes of the electors to know that he never supported the Prohibitory Liquor Bill, and that he is not the late Mr. John Abel Smith, Liberal member for Chichester." Bedad, now. Isn't he really? Does Mr. Abel Smith come from the land where bulls are said to be so plentiful? or is he only chaffing the electors when he tells them in his address that he isn't the man who died some time ago—at all, at all?

OUR FIRST NOTE relates to a *rather* comical misprint. We conclude with one that is certainly *very* comical, thanks to the printer's reader. Mr. Savile Kent, late of the Brighton Aquarium, is announced as about to take charge of "a Marine and Fresh Tater Aquarium" in New York. Of course the fresh taters will be kept in hot water.

All Contributions are attentively considered, and unaccepted MSS. are returned on receipt of stamps for postage; but the Editor cannot hold himself responsible for any accidental loss. No unaccepted MSS. will be returned until a written application has been made for them.

ONCE A WEEK

NEW SERIES.

No. 321.

February 21, 1874.

Price 2d.

JACK'S SISTER; OR, WOMANLY PAST QUESTION.

CHAPTER XIII.

LOVEJOYS AND LIGHT BLUE.

"Magdalen College, April 2.



CLIF—
How goes
on the
training? I have
lost two stone in
the last eight
weeks, and don't
care if I lose two
more, so as I
can do my share
in licking Light
Blue into fits;
wherefore, look
out for fighting,
old fellow. I've
even given up my

pipe; and oxen toddle off at the sight of me, as fearful of being cut up into diurnal steaks, half blue through! How could you go over to the wrong side? It makes me mad not to have you behind me in the eight. Don't believe, though, our captain would have had you, as you avow you don't and won't train to order. He's no end of a Turk, is old Jeffcoates, and makes the sweat run off some of our fellows' faces—aye, and the curses off their tongues—like rain. It does 'em good, though. They've plenty of go in them by nature. It's stay they want; and that he puts into them.

"By the way, there has been an awful bad business here; and the worst of it is that some one in our college has a hand in it. Who, hasn't turned up—the guilty party not caring to peach upon himself; and the consequence is we are all in evil favour with

the authorities. He must be a regular bad lot to put the whole college under a cloud because he hasn't spirit enough to own up. But the whole business seems awfully dirty; and, of course, a woman is at the bottom of it! There's an old bookseller at the corner of one of our streets, who deals in musty old rubbish, and has, or had, a very pretty daughter, who helped in the shop. I think I saw her once myself, in passing—a little, blue-eyed, rosy thing, quite a child; but it seems one of our fellows took a fancy to her, and I suppose the old story followed. (Ah, Clif! if you could but shut your eyes to women's fooleries! Did you never hear the story of that learned barrister who, whenever he heard a man was in great trouble, made a point of saying, 'Who was the woman?') Well, the father found it out in the end. I believe some decent fellow wanted to marry her; and there was no end of a row. Bookseller trying to force his daughter to own who had led her wrong, and she refusing to say a word. Girls have the pluck of ten men in them sometimes. In the end he locked her up, while he went on to our proctor. She bolted during his absence, and hasn't been seen or heard of since; but on the following day a straw hat, identified as hers, was found floating in the river, near the mouth of the Cherwell, and the general idea is that she has drowned herself. The father went to the Dean and President about it, and there has been no end of a breeze. Every one of us undergrads had up and cross-questioned, like prisoners at the bar; but with no result, except the discovery, as the Dean expressed it, that nine out of ten of his ingenuous neophytes were engaged in so many flirtations, that it was extremely hard to find out why Miss Bruce's affair shouldn't have figured in five or six of them. A nice slating we got on the score! It has come out, you see, that she got a letter from her lover, written on college paper, and signed

'M.;' also a book with some doggerel rhymes written on the fly-leaf, and 'M., Mag. Coll.,' underneath; but the fist didn't tally with any of our fellows'. White, of Oriel, who is clever in such matters, says it was a feigned hand; and if he's right, the young man had ought to be kicked out of college and round Oxford. Dirty blackguard! I would gladly lend a boot in the service; but the fast fellows wouldn't give me room. They are most furious about it, having got the worst tanning. Some (I among them) who have got a name for steering clear of girls, and the hard-reading men, including Merle—who, by the way, has been devilish seedy of late, laid up with a rheumatic attack—got off very easily; but a poor little chum of mine, one of the O.U.B.C., came in for no end of questioning, not only because his name begins with 'M'—for we have three of that ilk—but because he owned to having dawdled in the shop to talk to the girl; and it was proved that she was seen standing at the corner of a lane one day talking to an undergraduate about his size and make. The dons began to look no end ugly at him, and poor little Middlemist grew blue with wrath, and nearly lisped himself into a fit; but when some one asked the day and hour of this trysting, lo! and behold all our eight happened to be out doing the training pull to Abingdon at the time; so, 'Hurrah, for the boat club!' says Middlemist, and vows he will never speak to a woman again. A good job, too, if he don't. Most men have got mothers, some sisters, and all can get wives. There's three women to every man, and what the devil you want of more I can't imagine. However, this has been a lesson to the whole college, and still hangs in terrorem over many heads. Fancy the Dean going so far as to say he should like to gate every man Jack of us till the culprit was found out! It is a bad job; and I shouldn't wonder if we have a regular town and gown row this term on the strength of it; for the shopkeepers look as black as crows at our fellows; and poor old Bruce, the father, is ill in bed, and not likely ever to get up again, they say.

"What a long scrawl I'm indulging in! But it is so jolly to sit down to even a paper chat with you, dear old boy; and this blackguard job has taken away all other ideas. Now, however, I can say, 'Liberavi animam meam,' and go to pastures new. Not much time for them, I see. In all the intervals of

training I'm reading for my degree. For I leave Oxford at the beginning of the long vac, and have promised the governor to do it decently: wherefore, boat-race or no boat-race, I must keep my word, and pass somehow; though I say nothing about it at home, lest they should expect me to take a double-first. And now I must be off to Hall. Good-bye; we shall meet at Putney next week, and see what chance there is for us. You have the advantage of being on the ground first. But the papers say you hang feather, and that your time's none of the best. I never believe those reporter fellows, though; and I believe the betting is pretty equal as yet. God bless you, old fellow.—Yours always,

"JACK LEYBURN.

"Clifton Gore, Esq., Star and
Garter, Putney."

This letter was written three weeks before the boat-race—an interval on which I need not dwell. Nothing of any interest to the three heroes of my tale happened within it. Merle continued very ill—was, indeed, too weak and shaken to leave Oxford for the great race itself; and wrote to Enid that he was not strong enough to risk a relapse from the river air of Marshton Fallows during the Easter holidays, but should visit a clerical friend at Brighton instead.

The young man was indeed too much upset by the shock of Minnie's death and her father's illness—cleverly as he had managed to escape suspicion—to feel able to face the home circle. It was better to disappoint Enid than shrink from her inquiring eyes; to avoid the sympathy which he knew his haggard appearance would receive, rather than accept it as deserved. Therefore he sent them word that they would not see him till the long vacation; and received in return a long letter, full of affectionate rebukes for not coming home to be nursed, and reiterated injunctions to take a thorough rest and enjoy himself, which rather strengthened than shook his resolution. Enjoy himself, when Minnie's white, shuddering face rose before every meal he tasted! Rest, when, if he were idle for a moment, the memory of her broken, pleading voice rang in his ears, and made him curse himself!

He had not courage to confess his fault—not even to show it as lighter than the world supposed, though he knew such showing would be an inestimable comfort

to the dying father; for what proof was there of his words? and who would believe him now Minnie was dead—dead and drowned, with her beautiful face, and round white limbs all tangled and bruised, among the weeds and stones at the bottom of the river, down by Abingdon Lock; but it was some comfort even to give up his holiday, and go off to read in a stupid seaside parsonage with a man he disliked, when every pulse of his sick, aching heart was yearning for the old friends in the old-fashioned town, when the sun was shining gaily on the tender green of the limes and poplars, on beds of pale, starlike primroses, golden buttercups, and tangled white and blue violets, in moist, leafy nooks among the pollard oaks and daisy-sprinkled meadows; where the grammar school boys were already beginning to talk of bathings in the "Tub;" and where Enid pursued her calm and quiet life, undisturbed by the sight of sin and trouble save among the poor she visited, and knowing no more unpleasant task than the paying a first call on strangers, such as that long-deferred one on the Lovejoys, which, at the moment we revisit the town, she is just starting to pay, in company with Aunt Jane, and a mind so full of other matter that she would far rather have been at home.

It was the day of the race!

"This is the house, I think, auntie," she said, stopping in front of a prettyish, creeper-covered cottage in the Grove-road. "Have you got your cards, in case they shouldn't be at home?"

"No, my dear, and you reminded me of them. Dear me, how stupid of me to forget!"

"And how wise of me to remember!" said Enid, holding up the card-case with a smile. "See what it is to have a niece! I rather hope one of them will be out, you know. It will be so embarrassing if they scowl at each other, or squabble, won't it? and you know how unfriendly you told us they were, even in their courting days."

"Courting days, my dear Enid—what an expression for a young lady! I trust these young people will have the grace to appear amicable before company, at any rate. Always remember that nothing is so ill-bred as to show any of your private feelings in society. True ladies are all cast in one mould; and, besides, I should hope that

this young couple have got a little more used to each other by this time."

Apparently they had. As the neat little maid who admitted the ladies opened an inner door, and announced "Miss Leyburn and Miss Enid Leyburn," a scuffle took place in that part of the room where a gentleman was writing; and a young lady, who appeared to have been sitting on the table with her arm round the gentleman's neck, jumped down and came forward, blushing very much, and arranging her dishevelled ringlets with one hand, while she held out the other to greet her new acquaintances.

"But I really never heard the hall door," she said, apologetically. "Charlie was talking such nonsense. Now, Charlie, you know you were. Don't speak, sir. Oh, by the way, my husband, Mrs. Leyburn—Miss Leyburn. And how kind it is of you to walk so far."

"We think this hardly deserving the name of a walk, Mrs. Lovejoy; and having been told our new curate was a married man—"

Miss Leyburn was beginning very stiffly, when Mrs. Lovejoy interrupted her with a little cry.

"Oh, yes! Charlie never went in for celibacy, like those stupid High Church people—did you, ducksy? Indeed, we both think it quite wicked."

"So I suppose," said Enid, smiling pleasantly, because she saw an expression foreboding something sharp in her aunt's face. "And how do you like our funny old town, Mr. Lovejoy?" turning to that gentleman, who, after shaking hands with his guests, had contented himself with smiling amorously at his wife from a corner until thus addressed, when, rousing himself with a palpable start from the agreeable contemplation, he answered, nervously—

"Oh, well, really, Miss Leyburn, I think we like it very much; don't you, darling? Most healthy, I'm sure; and the archdeacon very kind. He took me over the minster and schools the first day, besides introducing me to some of my poor parishioners in a very pleasant manner. Indeed, I enjoyed it all exceedingly."

"I don't think it was very pleasant," said Mrs. Lovejoy, pouting. "Taking you away from me for nearly a whole day, instead of letting me go too. Cross old thing! when even the Bible says husbands and wives should never—never be separated; and you

are an unkind ducksy to say you enjoyed the minster without me. Isn't he, now, Miss Leyburn?"

"Emily knows how much more I enjoyed it with her on the following day, Miss Leyburn," said Mr. Lovejoy, earnestly. Then turning to his wife with a pathetically grieved expression, "You did not really think your Charles unkind, dearest, did you?"

"Oh, Charlie!—no! You unkind? Never! How could you think so?"

And Mrs. Lovejoy stretched out two plump, white hands to her husband, who pressed them tenderly in what can only be described as "emotion too deep for words."

A servant interrupted the touching scene.

Some poor woman wanted to speak to Mr. Lovejoy, and his wife followed him to the door with wistfully regretful eyes, exclaiming, as it closed behind him—

"They never leave him in peace for ten minutes together; and it is always the women. 'A poor woman,' indeed! I believe they admire him, brazen things! Poor dear fellow, how sensitive he is. Did you notice, Miss Leyburn, how deeply he felt my silly joke? It was really very wrong and cruel of me, wasn't it?"

"You are too severe on yourself, Mrs. Lovejoy," said Aunt Jane, drily; "there is nothing wrong or cruel in a silly remark. By the way, I suppose you do not remember me at all; though I knew your father, and, indeed, all of you, many years ago."

"Did you really?" the young wife answered, abstractedly, her head in a listening position. "Now, I wonder how long that woman will keep Charlie? I've a good mind to go and call. Oh, no, I don't remember at all. I am the youngest of four, and"—with great animation—"the *only* married one. Oh! I do pity my poor sisters so much."

"For being unmarried?" Enid asked, smiling.

"Well, yes. It is so dull, isn't it? I'm sure I never knew what bliss was till I married Charlie. There is no happiness like it, is there, Mrs. Leyburn?"

"Not being married myself, I cannot tell you," the spinster answered, shortly. "From what I have seen, however, I should say there is no unhappiness like it sometimes."

Mrs. Lovejoy gave one of her little "Oh's!" in deprecation, then exclaimed—

"I really thought the servant said Mrs. Leyburn."

And then glanced at Enid as much as to say, "Poor old thing! Sour grapes, of course."

Miss Leyburn intercepted the look, and understood it.

"There are two much worse things than a single life," she said, sharply; "*i.e.*, to marry a tyrant or a fool. I think the latter would be the worst. Hem!"

"Ah! But to marry a man like Mr. Lovejoy," cried the wife, utterly unconscious of the sneer; "to feel yourself one with such a loving heart, such a noble mind and Christian— Ah, here he is!"

"Who is *he*? and why does his wife leave off talking when he comes in?" asked Mr. Lovejoy, smiling on his spouse as she stopped short, covering her face in pretty confusion. "Darling, you won't mind; but this good person wants me to go and see her daughter, who is ill."

"What, now, Charlie? and mayn't I—" "Go with you," she was going to say; but remembering her guests' presence, broke off with a childishly distressed face.

Miss Leyburn rose with dignity.

"I think it is quite time to say good-bye," she observed, "Enid, my dear. Good afternoon, Mr. Lovejoy. Remember, we shall be happy to see you and your wife at the Cedars."

"And do come to see me again. I should like to show you Charlie's sketches," said Mrs. Lovejoy, shaking hands cordially with Enid, whose grave eyes had won her silly heart, as they did most people.

"Good-bye, Miss Leyburn. Charlie, Charlie!" rushing back into the house. "You are *not* to put on your over-coat. I like to do it for you. Bad boy!"

"Please walk very quick, Aunt Jane," said Enid, as they got outside the white gate. "I want to laugh so much. I don't feel as if I could wait till we get past the windows."

"I want to be sick!" cried Miss Leyburn, betrayed into strong language by the depth of her feelings. "What could Lady Crawford mean? Cold, reserved!—a couple of love-sick idiots! Enid, you really must not laugh in that way! Some one might see you. It is not correct."

"Aunt Jane," said Enid, composing her bright face into an expression of solemnity, "from this moment renounce your hopes

of seeing me well married. I make a vow of celibacy on the spot."

"My dear child!"

"No, auntie, it is too much. I could stand a great deal, a very great deal, of unkindness and hardships from my husband; but to be called 'ducksy' and have my hand squeezed in public—"

"My dear, we will not discuss it. It is positively disgusting and indecent. Look! is not that your father?"

Mr. Leyburn it was, coming to meet them, with a telegram in his hand; and Enid, hurrying forward, was the first to hear his greeting.

"Lost!"

"Oh, papa! you don't mean it? Not Oxford?"

"Yes, my dear, here is Jack's telegram:—

"'Light-blue wins. Oxford beaten by more than a length.'

"Well, I am sorely disappointed."

And Mr. Leyburn spoke as heavily as though he were still an undergraduate. Enid slipped her hand through his arm.

"I can hardly believe it," she said.

"Poor, dear Jack, how sorry he will be! I wish we could do something to comfort him this minute."

"I don't suppose it was the stroke's fault," said Mr. Leyburn, proudly. "However, perhaps he will go back to his books now. I am vexed, though."

"So am I," said Aunt Jane. "My dear, we have been calling on such a brace of fools. Ask Enid."

But Enid was too down-hearted at Jack's disappointment to have spirit for describing the Lovejoys; and leaving her aunt to tell the story in the garden, she slipped upstairs to comfort her brother by a long, affectionate letter, full of sympathy and cheering; and giving minute details of all the home matters which were most interesting to him personally; after which the young lady comforted herself by coming down to dinner in a white muslin dress trimmed with dark blue ribbons, and insisting on their all drinking to that colour as if it were the conqueror.

"Bumpers, mind, papa," she said, filling his glass to the brim, "and with all the honours."

"Better luck to the dark blue next year," added Mr. Leyburn, smiling. "And may they never have a worse oar than Master Jack. Good health to him."

"After that I feel as if I must certainly throw my glass over my head, like Charles Edward's cavaliers," laughed Enid. "Auntie, please don't look so shocked. Jack's health!"

"And let us trust he will set his heart on better and wiser things than boat-races," said Miss Leyburn; but no one heard her; for the maid had entered with a letter from the disappointed hero, and all three were soon deep in its perusal.

"I believe it was all Clif Gore," Jack wrote. "He told me himself that he had got into hot water at Cambridge about not training. I know he missed several of the trial trips here; and Jones, their No. 3, feathered so vilely we made sure of winning. Indeed, I think our very security made us careless; for we were three lengths ahead before we had gone half a mile. Near the end, however, Middlemist of ours flagged the least bit in the world. The papers said all along that his small size must tell against him in the long run; and the moment it did, Clifton put on a spurt. Such a spurt! Every one saw him do it. Their boat seemed to give one spring forward, and all was over. I could have gone ashore, and shot myself for sixpence. Would you believe it, the beggar's whole hand will fit into my palm! I call it downright mean, and I told him so, to have a fiddle-faddle white wrist, like a girl's, and muscles like steel wires underneath it."

"Now, isn't that like Jack?" said Enid, looking up with glowing cheeks. "In the midst of his own disappointment, he's just as pleased as he can be at his friend's triumph. Can't you see how he glories in him? Dear old Jack!"

"I wish the Gores would be contented to live at the Hall, instead of wandering about the Continent, and leaving the place shut up," said Mr. Leyburn. "I wonder what their son has grown up like. He used to be a nice boy."

"Very nice," said Enid, promptly. "I shall never forget his giving me that rose. I was only a little girl then; but he had such a pretty way of taking notice of me—not patronizing, like most boys. I quite loved Clifton."

"My dear, recollect he is a young man now," observed Aunt Jane. "And people seldom fulfil the promise of their youth."

"You needn't tell me that," Enid answered,

shaking her head dolefully. "Has he not 'fallen, fallen, fallen from his high estate' already? Beating my Jack, indeed! I can't bear him now."

CHAPTER XIV.

CLIFTON'S MOTHER.

JACK, in the meantime, quite unconscious of the sympathy lavished on him, was dining merrily with the united crews of the rival Universities; and by the time that both the winning and losing side had been toasted and retooasted till there was hardly a toast left in the bottles, or a clear idea in the brains of some of the toasters, Enid had been fast asleep in her pretty dimity-curtained bed a couple of hours or more.

Jack and Clifton were two of the first to leave the festivities. The indispensable billiard match, wherein the latter was to play, had been fixed for the following day this year; and the two old schoolfellows had so much to say to one another, that neither was sorry when he found himself free of the glare, noise, and tobacco smoke, and walking up Piccadilly with the full white light of an unclouded moon shedding a flood of silver over their path, as the great orb rose solemnly above the trees in the Green Park.

"Mustn't it look glorious on the river at Marshton Falls?" said Clifton, putting his arm through his friend's. "Dear old fellow, it's awfully jolly to see you again."

"When are you coming to pay us a visit down there?" Jack asked, jerking his head at the moon; though by "there" he meant his native town.

"I don't know. I wish I could this vac—but I don't see how I can."

"Why not?"

"Well, my people are only here while Parliament is sitting; and they expect your humble servant to devote his leisure hours to the cultivation of their society."

"Gammon!" said Jack, brusquely. "Do you suppose they would break their hearts if you were to take the train and run down to us for a day or two?"

"Perhaps not; but—"

"Well?"

"There are all the season's engagements; and one girl I know who—"

"I knew it! That's always the end of your stories, Clif. A girl! What you see in girls I can't imagine. And I thought last time you wrote to me that you were

breaking your heart over some Black-eyed Susan in Cambridge."

"You Goth, to speak so irreverently of that sultana-orbed houri. 'Black-eyed Susan,' indeed! Lakes of jetty fire, my boy, and a smile like scarlet flame rippling beneath them."

"Something like the infernal regions, I should think," observed Jack.

"Well, they nearly led me in that direction; for I found out very soon that she was engaged to some one else; and I really was deucedly hard hit just then."

"You always are."

"She didn't seem to mind my spooning on her, either—took it rather pleasantly than the reverse; and the other fellow was away. Indeed, if she hadn't alluded to him now and then—"

"By way of stirring up the furnace of your sighs."

"Exactly, and with the expected result. Girls are so clever, Jack. They don't content themselves with being so pretty, one would like to take them up and kiss them; but they are so—so awfully clever, they force one to make a fool of oneself."

"Did you?"

"All but. The other fellow saved me. I was taking tea there one evening, sitting close to my adorable, when the slavey announces 'Mr. Bonsor;' and there rushes into the room a great, red ox—I beg his pardon, a fat, greasy-headed man, all in a pink bath of perspiration and affection, who flings his big arms round Caroline, knocking the bread and butter into my lap, and kisses her—I give you my word of honour, kisses her beautiful serpentine mouth right before her father and mother and me, as coolly as—as ever you please."

"I thought you intimated he was rather warm about it."

"Don't you be a cold-blooded beggar, Jack."

"Not likely, after all that champagne. Well, go on. What came next?"

"Nothing came, but I went—aye, and never came back again, either. That embrace was enough for me—not to speak of the bread and butter having irredeemably ruined a perfectly new pair of bags, to the great delight of my tailor, who had to send me another."

"Oh, woman! in your hours of ease, Do you never think of griefs like these?"

"And did you ever see the flaming-eyed young woman again?"

"Yes, I met her near Caius one Sunday, walking to church with the ox. She looked piteously at me, and held out a slender hand cased in primrose kid. I clasped it in mine, 'smiled a smile,' as Artemus hath it, and passed on. Voilà la fin! Yes, my dear Jack, there are things in heaven and earth which beat the stoutest philosophy; and to see your adored kissed in public by a red and bovine individual with a damp head—ugh! it's bad enough when fathers kiss their daughters before you. I always think that the ne plus ultra of bad taste."

"Can't say it ever struck me in that light. Why shouldn't they? No, my girl, I've nothing for you," to a beggar girl who had stopped in front of him with outstretched hands.

"Wait a moment," said Clifton, fumbling in his pocket. "What a pretty face it is, Jack, quite— Why, Jupiter and Andromeda! is the girl mad?"

It seemed so. Before he could even extract the coin from his purse she had flung her hands over her face and fled away down the street. They could hear the tap, tap, tap of her feet going down the deserted pavement long after she had passed out of the moonlight like a wandering spirit, and lost herself in the inky darkness beyond. The young men looked at one another in blank amazement.

"Well, wonders will never cease," said Clifton, shrugging his shoulders. "Cuming is right. When beggars fly from the sight of a sixpence, the millennium must be near. And what a sweet little face it was, too! Did you notice?"

"Not I. I never looked at her."

If he had, that beggar's flight might have been stayed, and the course of my story altered; but Jack Leyburn had not begun as yet to look into women's faces, and before another minute the incident had passed from both their minds, and Clifton was deep in a description of his last flame—some Lady Madge Brabazon, with a glorious nightingale voice which exactly harmonized with his own tenor. Jack listened and laughed. He would have despised all that sort of thing in another man; but Clifton's flirtations were so openly carried on, and so merrily confessed, that they seemed merely the overflow of a too light-hearted, affectionate disposition. "Not to speak of all

the women making love to himself," as Jack added, sotto voce.

Aloud he thought it his duty to speak differently.

"You'll get into a scrape some day, young man, and find yourself buckled to some one you don't care a hang for."

"The process of unbuckling is inexpensive nowadays," said Clifton, coolly, "and Lord Penzance doesn't waste much time over it."

"Oh! that's all very well; but if you got any one else into a scrape you'd never forgive yourself."

"I take care to avoid the danger, Sir Galahad."

"But seriously, if you did—should you like it?"

"Seriously, I should not."

"I wouldn't run the risk, then, if I were you."

"There is no risk, my dear Jack. The girls all know I admire them. How can I help it when nine out of ten are equally pretty and good-natured? I can't afford to marry any one for years to come; and if I could, they mightn't all want to marry me. All's square at present. I like it, and they like it. 'Les cœurs qui s'aiment ne sont que entre-ouverts; ils s'entendent à demi mot.' Rochefoucauld—hem!"

"Well, I suppose you mean to get married some time or another?"

"Possibly."

"I aint a lady's man myself," said Jack, slowly, "but I mean to marry one of these days; and I should like to be able to tell my wife, 'I never loved any woman before you—so you may trust me to love none afterwards.'"

"Quite wrong, Jack," said Clifton, laughing heartily. "There isn't a woman living who wouldn't rather be a man's last love than his first, and it's a moral impossibility to be both. What has set you on this tack, old fellow?"

"I don't know. That affair at Oxford, I think."

Jack alluded to Minnie's disappearance and supposed suicide.

"They say the father's death is daily expected; and I don't envy the fellow who has been the cause of it all."

"Nor I," said Clifton, heartily. "Funny, none of you guessed who the blackguard was; but you needn't fear, old boy, I shall have no stories like that to tell my wife."

They were at the door of Jack's hotel now; and resisting an invitation to enter on the score of the lateness—or rather earliness, for it was striking one—of the hour, Clifton bade his friend good night; coming back, however, to add—

"If I don't come to you before noon, Jack, you'll be sure to look us up?"

"Us, meaning the men of Cam?"

"No, I'm staying at home. Belgrave-square, you know."

"All among the swells, eh? You had better come after me, Clif. I should be shy of invading the fashionable haunts of Belgravia."

"Gammon! I want you to know my little mother. I'll back her against any woman for perfection any day; and as to Belgravia, don't you be a snob, sir. One place ought to be the same as another to a man of the world, and Belgrave-square's awfully jolly. Did you never hear this?

'Oh, Belgrave-square is gayest there,
Beyond compare, of all the rare
Rich districts where—'

"For goodness' sake, Clif, moderate your lungs, or the policeman will think you're screwed."

"My dear fellow, don't interrupt—

'Rich districts where the swell and fair
Delight to breathe the London air;'

My own composition. Why don't you applaud? Stay, I've got another line—

'And Jack the bear is—is—'

Supply a rhyme, please."

"Supply a strait-waistcoat, you mean. Good night, master troubadour."

"Good night, master churl, till to-morrow."

And this time Clifton was really off, humming his "own composition" all the way, with cheerful disregard of proprieties or policemen, until he reached his own home. A sleepy-looking porter admitted him, yawning behind his hand in silent reproach for being called up at such uncanonical hours, and pointed out a folded note on the hall table, which Clifton took up and read. It brought a tender smile to his lips.

"Sitting up for me, is she? Dear old lady—and it's so late," he muttered, as with a good-natured "Thanks" to the servant he hurried up the broad stairs, their wide landings gay with stands of hothouse flowers,

and stopping before a door on the second floor, knocked gently.

A voice, very sweet, though rather feeble, bade him "Come in;" and Clifton entered a small octagon room, which at first sight gave you the idea of being all blue and gold, for the walls were hung with light brown leather studded with stars, which stars reappeared amid floating blue clouds on the ceiling. The carpet also was of turquoise blue, with a running pattern of brown and gold interwoven in its velvety pile; and the chairs and couch of dead blue silk, in frames of satinwood inlaid with ebony. One end of the room was filled with a bay window, its broad plate glass centre surrounded by gorgeously stained panes representing some Grecian idyll, and draped with gossamer lace curtains lined with blue silk. A Wedgwood stand of rare and delicate flowers, a writing table of ebony inlaid with gold and mother-of-pearl, and two easy chairs, stood in this recess; while, exactly opposite, was a long mirror, draped like the window, and reflecting an exquisite copy in white marble of Canova's Hebe.

Very few pictures adorned the walls, and those chiefly miniatures, interspersed with three or four water colour sketches by Danby and Birket Foster; but on a tiny gipsy table, in the full glow of the sparkling firelight, stood a small gold easel, supporting a portrait of a handsome lad in college gown—a lad whose merry blue eyes reflected those now laughing in the doorway, and whose bonny presence was the fairest thing in all creation to the old lady who, reclining in an easy chair, with her feet sunk in the snow-white wool of an Astracan rug, turned a face so like his own to welcome him, that no stranger would have needed to be told that this was the "little mother" of whose perfection Clifton had boasted to his friend some ten minutes before.

Perfect, indeed, in his eyes! One of those old ladies who have not only been beautiful in their youth, but are beautiful now—beautiful with a beauty far excelling that of many young and pretty girls: the delicate features fine and regular as Clifton's own; the blue eyes clear and sweet, and only her white hair betraying the lapse of time that had passed since those bright eyes and locks had won Sir Henry Gore's volatile affections.

"I have given the gold to my boy now," she was wont to say; but the statement

was hardly exact, for Lady Gore's graceful head gave one the idea of snow-flakes powdered with gold dust, so brightly glittered the original glory through the veil which illness more than years had drawn over it. Indeed, you might see traces of the same delicacy, which so often banished her from England, in the pathetic little pinch and quiver round the pretty mouth, always the surest sign of long and wearing pain, and in the one sharp, upright line between her still dark and delicately arched brows—a line which deepened when the suffering was keenest, and almost faded at those times when she was feeling her best. It was hardly visible now as she rose up, rustling softly in her rich, dark silks, and holding out both hands to her son with a smile of most loving welcome. If ever there was a young man whose mother idolised him, it was Clifton Gore.

"I could not go to sleep till I had kissed you and wished you joy, my darling," she said, suiting the action to the words, as he bent his face to meet hers. "How worn-out you must be. The Brabazons were calling here when the telegram arrived; and I think they must have thought me crazy, for I fairly clapped my hands and cried out, 'My boy has won!' without—"

"Without any one to help him," Clifton broke in with laughing unceremoniousness, as he flung himself down on the rug at his mother's feet, stretching out his long legs luxuriously. "Pulling the Cambridge boat all by himself against the Oxford eight; and winning by ten lengths, amid the cheers of twenty thousand spectators! Did they laugh at you very much, little mother?"

"No, indeed. Lady Brabazon did say, 'You mean Cambridge, I suppose?' But she seemed very much pleased, and congratulated me warmly on my share in the triumph."

"And the fair Madge, mother? I hope she seemed properly impressed with my laurels."

The tone was laughing; but Lady Gore would have given much to have seen the face. Gently patting the golden head that rested against her knee, she answered, a little constrainedly—

"Lady Madge—I don't think she said much."

"Observe the vagueness of my mother's reports when they come to the young ladies, Floss," said Clifton, addressing him-

self to Lady Gore's tiny King Charles, which, with its feathery dark paws on the young man's shoulder, was trying hard to lick his face. "Logical deduction, my mother thinks Lady Madge dangerous. Oh, you transparent old lady! Tell me what she said at once. If it wasn't something very nice, you wouldn't have hesitated."

"You are a very impertinent boy," said Lady Gore, with a smile which contradicted her words. "Perhaps I hesitated because I thought her words hardly nice enough. She said, 'Oh, dear, then there will be no use in asking him to sing at our concert on Wednesday. He will have spoilt his voice for a week. How vexatious!'"

"Sadly so," said Clifton, laughing, though his face flushed, too. "If she had been at Willis's to-night, and heard me giving the fellows 'Ho, pretty page with the dimpled chin,' she might have been consoled as to the powers of her two-legged barrel organ."

"My dear Clif!"

"My dear mother! Is it not glorious to achieve anything in life, even the post of Madge Brabazon's primo tenore?"

"Then you don't care for her, Clifton?"

"Indeed I do. She is my donna primissima at present, and deservedly; her soprano is simply perfect; and when she throws back her head in a prolonged shake!—come, mother, at that moment you must allow her the dearest little chin in the world."

Lady Gore laughed, and pulled one of the shining curls which she was twisting round her fingers.

"I will allow anything but that you should lose your heart over a girl who has none to give you," she said. "The prettiest chin would be too dear at that price."

"Put cotton wool in my ears then while she is singing," retorted Clifton. "For at some moments—particularly that tender bit in 'La ci darem'—I feel madly impelled to fall upon my knees and offer my hand, my heart—the musical part of it, at least—and my allowance of £300 a-year to her acceptance. *Of course* she would fling dukes, earls, and marquises to the winds, and herself into my arms, in a paroxysm of gratitude. I declare, little mother, you are not taking proper care of your son in asking her here at all."

"I am satisfied, Master Saucebox, and will even forgive you for making game of your parent, so you will not make yourself unhappy. That I couldn't bear, Clif, and

yet your caprices keep me in a perpetual anxiety. I should like to see you happily married, my darling."

"So you shall some day, mother mine. Only choose me a nice enough wife, and I'll marry her to-morrow."

Lady Gore sighed with the mental conviction that anything nice enough for her idol would be hard to find, and still harder any one nice enough to fix and retain the idol's volatile affections. Sir Henry had not been a perfect husband, and even Lady Gore's beauty and sweetness had been insufficient to save her from many and many a headache.

"Do you know what time it is?" she said at last, rousing herself from a rather sad reverie, during which Clifton, tired out by the day's exertions, and finding his position very comfortable, had fallen into a doze. "Nearly two, and your father has been in bed a couple of hours. Rouse up, dearest, and go to bed. You must be worn out."

"Done to rags," laughed Clifton, sleepily. "Mother, did you see that dear old Jack Leyburn was stroke of the Oxford crew?"

"Yes; but I forgot to ask you after him. How was he looking? and how did he bear defeat? It was pleasant meeting him again."

"Looking? Like Goliath. I must bring him here to-morrow to see you. The lad is a perfect giant, and the lion of the Dark Blue. It half spoils my pleasure in winning to see him among the beaten ones."

"That affection never falters?"

"No, nor ever will, mother. I can't imagine the thing that would make a breach between Jack and me."

And yet it was to be—and in so short a time. Alas, for our mortal short-sightedness! If we could only see into the future, what a deal of misery we might be spared.

Lady Gore begged that Jack might be brought by all means. She made a point of welcoming Clifton's friends as her own on all occasions. Perhaps if most mothers did the same their sons might be more careful in making acquaintances, and more ready to stay at home than go out in search of friendship.

"I loved Mrs. Leyburn dearly," Lady Gore said; "and Enid was a sweet little girl. So gentle and wise for her age. I wonder how she has grown up."

"First-rate, I should think; for Jack says

he has never met a girl to like better than his sister, and you know brothers are not given to partiality."

"They ought to be. I often wish you had had a sister, love."

"So do not I—my weakness being to know myself monarch of all I survey," and he twisted himself round, so as to look up affectionately into his mother's face. "I want no rivals here, my lady."

"You are a selfish boy; and you will have hollows round your eyes to-morrow. Get up at once, and go to bed."

"When I have seen my mother to her room," cried Clifton, springing up to light the candle, which stood on a table near by, and returning to give her his arm to her own door.

His college life had not rubbed off any of his polish. The lad was as chivalrously gallant now as when he started off, years ago, to buy a confectioner's ornament for Enid's hair; only instead of reserving his natural grace of manner for society after the manner of some young men, he lavished them freely on home—had been known to give a gouty old man his arm across a crowded London crossing, to give up the only cab on a stand in favour of a weary-looking widow woman, and to leave the belle of a ball-room to be snapped up by some rival candidate because his mother was sitting in a draught, and there was no one nigh to convoy her out of it. These are only trifles, it is true—small courtesies which grow on the outside, and tell little of the soil within; but they go a great way to making a man lovable in the eyes of those who gather them.

Civility, as we are often told, costs nothing; and as, on the other hand, it undoubtedly pays better than many more valuable commodities on this earth, it might be well if our young men cultivated it more often than is the fashion nowadays to do. Clifton's came to him by nature; but Lady Gore had trained it sedulously from his early childhood, and found her reward now in the pretty little attentions which he delighted to lavish on herself, and in the envy which many mothers openly avowed for her possession of "such a charming son."

Jack came to call on the following day, and very nearly fell in love for the first time in his life, Lady Gore fascinating him as completely as she did most of Clifton's men friends, and throwing herself into his home

and college interests with a cordial sympathy which quite finished the young fellow's subjugation.

Consequently he made no resistance against an urgent invitation to visit the Gores at St. Leonard's during the autumn, when both he and Clifton would have left college for good; and Clifton in return promised to spend Christmas with the Leyburns if, as generally happened, Lady Gore's health did not allow her to pass the winter in England.

THE CASUAL OBSERVER.

SEEKING FOR LIGHT.

THE gas we are going to burn to-night is being made far down in what used to be Fulham Marshes. The muddy river runs close by; old Battersea Church is just opposite; and a little creek filled with black barges comes close up to several smoking factories that seem to be in an incipient state of conflagration; while, just at hand, are several Brobdingnagian pill-boxes, which a closer inspection shows to be huge gasometers, running up and down between pillars of handsome Corinthian architecture, with fluting and florid capital complete. It is a vast place this, many acres in extent.

There are buildings of brick, railways, round towers of iron, engine-houses, engineers' shops, stores, offices, warehouses, mountains of coal, and extinct volcanoes of coke; and, above all, a laboratory.

We stand first by the creek wherein lie barges of coal—Newcastle; and close by are trucks of that hard, shining mineral known as Cannel. Blackened men are busily filling an iron truck with iron scoops or shovels, bent of handle, and resembling in shape the ordinary spade of a pack of cards. The truck is filled, hooked on to bands, "whizz" go engine and wheel, and the iron truck flies aloft fifty feet, to a railway, upon a scaffolding, running round each retort house, side by side with which are the coal stores. The little iron waggon is checked over a hole, a lever is touched, the bottom drops, and the freight of coals runs down a shoot into the stores. To follow the coal is the next step, but one descends by ladder, and reaches a smoke-filled building, where the heat is fearful; and glistening in the glare of smoky light, and amid the clangour of iron upon iron, and the occasional loud

report of an open retort, men are hurrying about naked to the waist, their skin blackened with smoke, and mapped out, back and breast, with rivulets of perspiration streaming down.

Facing us there is a wall of brick, studded with what seem to be little iron doors—the retorts, these, of fire-clay, about two feet across, and twenty-seven feet or so in length.

These retorts run right through to the other side of the building, and have a lid, or door, at each end; and, while we look on here, the same process is going on beyond the glowing, roaring furnace that heats the retorts.

"Bang!" A nude fellow has opened the door of a retort—a door cemented with lime and clay to make it air-tight, and then screwed up. The noise was caused by the air, and there is a rush out of flame and smoke, while the face is scorched by the contents of glowing coke. A long iron rake is introduced, and the orange-tinted coke is drawn out, to fall down through a hole to a floor beneath, where men are at work quenching it with water, and shovelling it aside for sale. But the retort, one of hundreds, is now empty, and three men prepare to fill it with a giant marrow-spoon, or scoop of iron, twelve or fourteen feet long, and having a cross handle like an old-fashioned spade.

The scoop is soon filled, one man takes hold of the T-shaped handle, the other two, after giving a signal to the men on the other side by rapping the floor with an iron bar, pass the said bar beneath the scoop, and raise it about the middle, lifting it level with the oven-like retort-mouth, when, wish! in an instant it is run in nearly to the cross-handle, which the holder gives a twist, and the coal is left in the retort. This process is repeated several times, when the retort is sealed up at either end, and exposed to raging heat for six hours, at the end of which time the gas, tar, and ammonia have passed off, and the process is repeated.

Leaving the blackened workers—men who earn their thirty-six or thirty-eight shillings per week, and forming part of a staff, eleven hundred strong in winter, though now less than half—we pass the engines pumping and sucking gas, and the other products of the coal, to the various receptacles. This, a huge iron tank of gas tar, with pipe and pump to run it into barges waiting to bear it

away; that, another tank, for ammoniacal liquor; while the gas passes first to a series of round towers of iron, filled with coke, and, going through these, it leaves behind a portion of its impurity before reaching the great square box-like purifiers, which are charged with a mixture of lime and per-oxide of iron or bog ore. This gives the finishing cleansing to the vapour, which then reaches one of the vast gasometers, some of which, when full, tower sixty feet or one hundred feet above one's head, while others, sunk in emptiness in their wells, are level with the ground and invite a walk over.

Next, one reaches a huge store of several floors covered with heaps of brownish-red earth—the per-oxide this, being exposed to the air to revivify it after cleansing gas in the purifiers; and then one is led into a building where, upon a dial, a delicately-poised index-hand marks the pressure of the gas flowing from the Imperial Gas Company's works to illumine London. In front are three wheels for turning on the gas, wheels like those on a steamboat or ship: The index now stands at 4, which is the usual day pressure, for the sun is yet high in the heavens; but come on dusk, and then darkness, more and more gas will be turned on, and the amount registered hour by hour in the book kept for the purpose.

In the laboratory delicate tests are going on, the gas passing through glass domes wherein hang pieces of paper dipped in solution of lead. There are glass ball tests for sulphur. And, again, here the flame is photographed, and its qualities printed off and preserved, like the test papers, in a register. But not yet is the vapour tortured enough. Its flame has to be measured, and its illuminating power at a certain pressure. Then delicate scales are brought into operation, and photometers, wherein, in darkness, so many grains of sperm candle are burned against so many inches of gas, and the illuminating powers of the gas to-day, yesterday, any day, recorded, as compared with the light of the candle.

Out again once more into the vast yard, where coke is piled in a mountain, and the loud boom of the opened retorts comes from the smoking windows of the great houses, from one of which, a great, muscular, blackened man comes to cool himself, and wipe away the streaming sweat.

"Cold, sir—ketch cold? No; we're used to it."

OUR DAUGHTER PATTY.

CHAPTER III.

CHRISTMAS DAY came at last. I think I shall never forget that day as long as I live. No, not if it be a hundred years.

And you'll say I've cause to remember it when you've heard all.

It was Patty's birthday as well. We'd all given her some little present; and, besides, there'd come for her by post a small box, registered. We were all so anxious to see what was inside it that Patty laughed and said she wouldn't open it till after breakfast, as an exercise for our patience—but she couldn't wait herself. I knew she couldn't when she said it. So she cut the string and undid the cover, and there was a lovely little bunch of forgets-me-nots. Wherever they could have come from, with the frost on the ground, passes me. In the middle of them lay a tiny hoop of pearls, tied with a bit of white ribbon.

Well, they all set to work wondering where it could have come from.

Father guessed Bob Brown. Whatever put that thought in his head, I can't think—it seemed so unlike Bob; and I could see Patty thought the same.

Inside the ring, when Patty turned it about, she saw engraven the words, "God be with you."

I had my own notions about the sender, and I know Patty was thinking of the same person.

They all agreed it was a beautiful present. I doubted if Patty ought to keep it, and so did Elizabeth. But then, as Patty said, "How was she to send it back when she didn't know where it came from?" Father advised her to "stick to it, no matter what any one said."

I'd always made it a rule to go to church on Christmas morning. Of course I looked to my pudding myself, and saw that the turkey was put down; for one never knows where one is if one leaves everything to the girl. Then Patty and Elizabeth would lay the cloth and set out the dessert; for we always had a little feast on Christmas Day, and had had ever since we'd been married.

However, I never let these things hinder us from going to church. I couldn't abide folks to say that me or my girls stayed at

home to cook the dinner, like some I could mention.

We'd a very good sermon from Mr. Jones. I can't just recollect the text, but I remember thinking it very suitable to the day.

After church, the Browns and Mr. Darrel walked home with us, and they were all joking and wishing Patty many happy returns of the day; and Patty was telling them of all the presents she'd had, but I didn't hear her say a word of the ring.

Patty had got me to ask them all to tea that night, as it was her birthday. I remember Elizabeth didn't approve of it; but I saw no harm in it, as Patty said her birthday only came once a year, and it wasn't her fault that it fell on a Christmas Day.

You see, Elizabeth held that Christmas should be kept more holy even than Sunday; Father and Patty held that it should be a day of rejoicing; and they had a great many words on the subject. Father got angry at last, and said he'd do what he liked in his own house. I'm sorry to say he said, too, "Confound Mr. Canter," and he wished he was at the bottom of the Red Sea, for he was making Elizabeth as big a prig as himself.

Elizabeth only looked at him, sniffed, and walked out of the room.

I was sorry Elizabeth should have had such a setting down; however, they soon made it up again—father was never one to bear malice for long.

The dinner went off splendidly. I will say this for Anne, she could manage a roast, with a little looking after, as well as any girl I ever had. The turkey was done to a turn, and the pudding was first-rate. Patty and father together kept us laughing the whole time, they were that droll, and made such quaint remarks. Then Patty would have Anne up, I remember, to drink her health, and it was all we could do to get Anne to take the wine. She said she was sure it would get into her head, not being used to it; but she took it at last, and another glass as well, and seemed just the same afterwards, so I suppose use is not always second nature.

Well, we'd finished dinner and had just drawn our chairs up round the fire, when there came a knock at the door.

"That'll be the Browns for me," said Patty.

Father got up and went to open the door for them.

"My gracious! you're never going skating to-day," cried Elizabeth.

"Yes I am," said Patty. "Why not? And I want you and father to come and see me, mother."

"But Patty, to-day of all days in the year!" said Elizabeth. "Why, Mr. Canter says——"

"I don't care a button what Mr. Canter says; I'm going to enjoy myself on my birthday. Say you'll come and see me, mother."

Elizabeth looked huffed.

"I don't know what to say between you," said I. "It does seem hard that Patty can't have her little bit of fun. But then again, as Elizabeth says——"

I did not get to the end of my speech, for at that moment father and the Browns came in, and we had to welcome them all.

Patty was not long before she was down-stairs again in her hat and jacket, and the last words she said to me, as she kissed me good-bye, were—

"Now mind you come, mother. I want you to see how beautifully I go along. You can't refuse me on my birthday, you know."

My heart misgave me all the time; whether, as Mr. Canter said, there was any harm enjoying oneself of a Christmas Day, or whether it was Elizabeth's look—for she seemed quite put about—I don't know; but I felt quite "down in the mouth," as father would say.

I began thinking of the pictures I'd seen of Christmas-time in the olden days, "Bringing Home the Yule Log," and such-like. Folks seemed to be merry enough in them, yet those were called the "good old days."

Dear me! were all the happy-looking men and women who had laughed and danced, and sung so gaily in those pictures, were they all bad? They looked innocent enough, goodness knows, in their queer, old-fashioned gowns, every one of them laughing that heartily.

I'd always done what I could to enliven up Christmas Day ever since the girls were little ones, and so had my mother before me. I'd never thought it wrong until now. Perhaps we oughtn't to have a turkey at all, nor any plum pudding. Lor! fancy Christmas Day and no pudding. Father would

never agree to that, I know. But who knows? maybe Elizabeth 'ud be for proposing it next year.

If it is wrong to enjoy oneself, it must be just as bad to make a feast. Where ought one to draw the line?

I was getting distracted, when suddenly father wakened up. He'd been taking his forty winks.

"Now then, are you ready, missis?" said he. "We must be off, or Patty 'll think we're not coming. I shouldn't like to disappoint the little lassie."

So Patty 'd been coaxing her father too. Well, I wasn't altogether sorry. I was quite tired of sitting alone, for Elizabeth had gone out to carry a few little things to some of her poor people.

When we got to the park, I declare it was quite a pretty sight. There were several ladies—so venturesome as they seemed—skimming along the ice. When I was a girl—but there, I'd better get on.

We soon picked out Patty; she was going along at a fine rate, arm in arm with Mr. Darrel. I couldn't help thinking what a handsome couple they made. Bob Brown was close behind, with Emmy. Patty saw us, and waved her hand to us, and looked so delighted I felt quite glad we'd come. Then she began figuring away by herself, to show us what she could do.

Father got quite excited, and told me how he used to skate when he was a boy. He said he'd been a first-rate hand at it. Then he clapped his hands and shouted—

"Well done, Patty! Bravo! Well done!"

Bob and Mr. Darrel put their two heels together, and bent down and skated round in some queer fashion father said was called spread-eagle.

Father and me felt quite proud of our Patty, for we didn't see one girl there could do as well.

Close to where they were skating there was a big hole broken at the edge of the pond, and in it a couple of swans. Poor things! I felt quite sorry for them paddling about there; it's a great mercy they weren't frozen to death. Father said the hole had been made purposely for them. It passes me altogether how the folks managed to keep from slipping in. Many and many a time it made me tremble to see how close they went to the edge—such slippery stuff as ice is too.

After we'd watched a bit longer, I be-

thought me it was high time for us to be getting home, with the Browns coming to tea and all. I ought to be seeing after things.

I'd not been in more than half an hour, and was just coming downstairs with some silver and things in my hand, when there came a sort of hurried knock at the door. Anne was in the parlour, and she ran to open it. There was Emmy Brown standing at the top of the steps, looking so scared and queer. I put down the things I was carrying on the hall table, and went to her.

"Why, Emmy, what's the matter?" I said.

When she saw me she came running in to me.

"Oh, Mrs. Gibson! don't be frightened! Bob sent me to prepare you," cried she, and began sobbing.

I felt a trembling, I can't tell why; but I felt all of a flutter, and couldn't say a word.

Father, hearing the noise, came into the passage.

"What's up? Don't cry, Emmy, my dear. Is anything wrong?" said he.

"It's poor Patty, Mr. Gibson," sobbed Emmy.

My heart gave a great jump, and something came into my throat and nearly choked me.

"She's fallen on the ice and cut herself, and Bob sent me to tell you, that it mightn't scare you to see her. Oh! don't look like that, Mrs. Gibson."

"She's killed, I know she is," screamed I.

"No, no, she's not!" cried Emmy. "Bob says it's only the shock and the cold water."

"Come, come, old lady," said father, putting his arm about me, "don't take on so."

But I could tell quite well from his voice that he was just as much put about as I was. And then he reached up his hand for his hat, poor dear! forgetting that he had it on his head all the time.

"Where is she? I must go and bring our Patty home. Keep a good heart, mother, we won't be long."

"She's coming. They're bringing her in a cab," broke in Emmy. "Oh, and I forgot—Bob told me to tell you to have plenty of hot blankets ready, and perhaps hot water 'll be wanted."

I hope it 'll never be my lot in this world to live over again minutes like those we

spent waiting for our poor Patty to come home.

We went about getting things ready for our darling, and each of us thought in our hearts the worst, though we said what we could to cheer one another.

Anne set to work crying directly she heard it, and nothing I could say would stop her or get it out of her head that the child was drowned.

Even in the midst of my misery I couldn't help feeling glad Elizabeth wasn't at home, for I was sure she and Mr. Canter would say this was a judgment on us. I had even time to wonder if it could be. Old as I was, I felt an inclination to laugh, or scream, or something of that kind. But, there—enough of that dreadful time—I wasn't myself a bit.

At last the cab came slowly along the street, and stopped at our door. Shall I ever forget it? There I stood, shaking and trembling—for I couldn't move, all the use seemed to have gone out of my legs—expecting to see I don't know what; while father went down and opened the cab door.

Bob Brown called out—

"There's nothing to be afraid of, Mrs. Gibson! The doctor says she'll be all right in a day or two. Stunned with the fall you know, Mr. Gibson. Here, let me get out first. Gently—there, now."

I can't tell you how thankful I was to hear him speak. It seemed so natural like.

I don't think father knew what he was about quite, for he seized Bob's hand, and began shaking it and asking him how he was, as if he hadn't seen him before that day.

There was some one else in the cab—Dr. Smith, I found out afterwards—and together they lifted out Patty. I felt quite fond of Bob; he took her so carefully in his great big arms, and spoke to us so cheerily all the time.

Poor darling Patty! so limp and draggled as she looked. All her pretty fal-lals and trimmings dripping wet. Some one had thrown an over-coat over her; and there was her poor lifeless face, with a handkerchief, all spotted and stained with blood, bound round her temples.

Ah, me! if any of you are mothers, think what it would have been to you, and you will know how I felt that day.

It was a weary time till Patty opened her

eyes. What with fright and loss of blood, and the freezing water, it's a marvel to me sometimes, even to this day even, how ever we got the child round at all.

Dr. Smith never once left her side that day. Such trouble as he had to restore circulation, trying first this thing and then that. We were kept continually on the run. I think it a great mercy that there was so much to do, for it kept our thoughts occupied as well as our legs.

We did not hear the rights of the story, of how it all happened, for two or three days after; and I don't understand it quite clearly now.

I believe that Patty was going at a great rate with Mr. Darrel, and some man coming in the opposite direction ran up against them with such force that he fell himself and knocked them down too. Either the man's skate or Mr. Darrel's, they couldn't rightly make out which, struck Patty a heavy blow on the side of the head; and somehow, in trying to save herself, or because she was nearest the edge, or, I should say, because of the slipperiness of the ice, poor Patty got pushed into the hole made for the swans.

Mr. Darrel was very much shaken with his fall; and it was Bob Brown got Patty out and saw to her. That night Patty went off her head and raved, poor dear—it broke my heart to hear her chattering of things maybe she'd never see again in this world.

Dr. Smith had feared concussion of the brain all along, he said, and now it was just touch-and-go whether our darling lived or not. I hardly know how the days passed away after that. I remember the frost was all gone before the doctor said we might hope. When I heard it I just began to sob and cry like a child, and it was all father could do to stop me.

The neighbours were very good sending in to ask after her, especially the Browns; and I must say for Elizabeth she never once reproached me or Patty either, or reminded us that Patty would go spite of her telling her not.

Patty was mending slowly. The doctor said she'd be disfigured for life with that ugly scar on her brow. I didn't mind it much, though, and neither did father. We were too thankful our precious Patty was spared to us to care for anything else.

Bob Brown would often run in and bring some grapes, or some flowers, or what not, to please her; and very kind and thoughtful

I thought it of Bob. Patty seemed to relish the grapes and things more than anything we could give her.

CORN WITHOUT SPECULATION.

WE start with an early morning in Essex—with the humming of a steam thrashing machine. Sheaf after sheaf of wheat is torn from its resting-place, the grain is beaten out, and then comes trickling in pale yellow streams, ready-dressed, into the sacks which are held ready for its reception. There have been a "sight" too many rats and mice in the stack; but Farmer Brown is not one to hold with keeping his grain too long on hand, so he gets a fair yield; and the next morning, with three or four neat little string-tied canvas bags of samples, each containing some half-dozen handfuls, he is on his way, over the border of the county, to Stortford Market, where his wheat being hard, bright of colour, large and plump of grain, he finds plenty of corn-factors ready to open one of his little bags, pour a portion carelessly into one hand, toss it up, taste it, spill a little on the ground, give it another toss, and then scatter the rest anywhere.

What does Mr. Brown want for his corn? Forty-four shillings. Buyer hopes he may get it, for he won't give that price. Mr. Brown hopes he may; and knowing that his article is equal to any in the market, shows it to one or two more factors, when, after a little haggling and bidding, Farmer Brown is offered sixpence per quarter less. How many quarters has he? Close upon two hundred, he should think; how many will the buyer take? Oh, he'll take the lot, and the samples are passed from one to the other. But there is yet a little business to go through; the factor bargains for Farmer Brown's waggons to deliver the corn at the railway station; he will not send it by the rivers Stort and Lea. So the seller starts at once for the goods department of the Great Eastern Railway, sees the local manager, and arranges for the loan of a hundred or a hundred and fifty sacks, branded with the company's name; and soon after John Brown dines at the market ordinary, and smokes the pipe of peace, returning home at night to see how the thrashing has gone on, and to give orders for another stack to be unbuilt.

The next day is Wednesday, and Mark-

lane Corn Exchange will be thronged. Thither, in company with perhaps a score more, go John Brown's samples, in a neat black leather bag; for this factor attends four or five country markets, and brings the fruits of his dealings to the great central Exchange, where his partner has a stand, upon which are being ranged the little open bags, each bag containing a scrap of paper somewhere nestled in the grain, telling of how many quarters there are thrashed out, being thrashed, or lying in sacks at the railway company's shed.

But in other sample bags lie here grains that to an experienced eye are known not to be of home growth. There is one parcel of a hard, flinty wheat, crisp as rice; a wheat small in size, and a long-grained wheat—no samples these from home counties, but foreigners all. Let us see how they have found their way to Mark-lane.

Nearly three miles below London Bridge, we stand by the great Commercial Corn Dock. Behind us tower up granaries, such as would have delighted a Joseph preparing for a seven years' Egyptian famine; before us, in the basin, are the corn vessels.

This green and weather-worn barque is a Swede, but is discharging a cargo of seed from Alexandria. Yon ship was a short time since laden at Dantzic; and this brig with the tapering masts is from the Black Sea. Corn vessels all, and merely items picked at random from a long list trading to parts washed by many a sea. Even San Francisco sends her golden grain—not nuggets or dust, but corn. Close up here by the wharf a large schooner is lying with her hatches off, displaying a hold full of wheat.

The steam crane is busy, and as sack after sack is filled by measure, it is whipped up to the fifth floor of the huge pile of buildings, to which we climb, and find ourselves in a vast space, where in bulk, feet thick, lie grains from the shores of the Baltic and Black Sea. Six thousand quarters upon this one floor alone—one floor of six, and this one granary of many, sometimes so full that the Dock Company have had to refuse to take in more for want of space. Here, lying side by side, the foreign grains are turned, returned, and ventilated, to keep them in good order; while the pert English sparrows flit here and there, taking occasional toll, no doubt, but welcomed visitors, from the number of insects they destroy.

Returning Londonward by water, we come

upon long snaky screw steamers, black of hull. Fast boats these, which seldom submit to the delay of going in dock; but, moored in mid-stream, they are busy now with lighters alongside, and corn-meters sent by the City merchants, and their labouring aids—euphoniously known as “tows-rags”—busy at work. There is steam, too, here; and as bag after bag is raised from the hold, the plume-like jets rise in the air each time a golden cascade of grain falls from the shoot into the barge waiting to convey it to some river-side granary.

A few hundred yards farther on, and we are at Canada Wharf, where rises, in no mean architectural display, the vast store-house of the Patent Ventilating Granary Company. A very corn palace this—an infirmary and hotel combined—for the reception of foreign grains. Save for directing purposes, the labour of man is almost banished here, steam and gravitation sharing the toil. No labourer's hand is called upon to touch the corn, but as ship or lighter is moored to the wharf, presto! a long trunk descends into the hold, and the grain is dredged or chain-pumped out, to rise to the foot of one of the lofty towers fronting the building, where elevators raise it again some forty or fifty feet to a long iron trough, wherein writhes an Archimedean screw, which, treating it like water, bears it up to the particular bin where it is to be stored.

We have no granary floors here, but bins, or “silos,” standing side by side, each 7 ft. square and 41 ft. high. They are made of perforated iron, while from bottom to top, running through the centre of each, is a perforated iron tube or chimney, 2 ft. in diameter; the result being a 40 ft. high column of grain, through which the air can freely penetrate, keeping it dry, cool, and sound for any length of time. So much for the corn which makes of this an hotel.

But it has been a wet harvest-time on some Russian steppe, and the cargo of this barque has been landed soft, heated, and damaged, so that it will fetch but a poor price in the market: this cargo then finds in the company's stores an infirmary. This wheat is raised by the elevators up one or other of the towers, as was the sound; the screw worms it to its particular bin; the central air-shaft is stopped at the top; and then, fifty feet below, a patent fan is set in motion, which, revolving a thousand times a minute, sends up a mighty draught of fresh,

dry air, making its way between the grains, drying, purifying, and destroying the destroyer—the heat-generated weevil; so that ere long the bin of grain, if not restored to its pristine state, is in a fit condition to be taken in sample, and to stand with the little bags late the property of John Brown, in Mark-lane.

And now the business of the great Exchange is at its height, and amidst the busy hum of voices—midst handling, chaffering, and comparing—farmers, factors, and millers make mighty transactions in corn, till the floor of the great building is in places covered with the scattered grains, British and foreign, kicked about, trampled on; till, the day's business at an end, the men of the contractor arrive, sweeping, shovelling, and bearing off in sacks wheat, oats, barley, maize, millet-grains almost out of number; for these sweepings, once the perquisite of the beadle, are now submitted to competition, and afford no mean harvest to the highest-bidding contractor—the arrangement by which one factor deals often but in one kind of grain enabling him, to a great extent, to keep his sweepings separate.

THE GHOST IN THE SNOW.

CHAPTER III.

THE DESERTED HOUSE IN THE FOREST.

IN the first place, however, we surveyed the ground floor of the house, and found it to consist of two apartments, in addition to that which we occupied. Both were somewhat smaller than the front room (which looked out into the forest, the trees growing almost close to the window), and both were similarly destitute of furniture. The farthest in the rear had an earthen floor, and had probably been used merely as a lumber-room or wash-house.

We then ascended to the upper floor; though it was not without difficulty that we scaled the dilapidated staircase, which trembled beneath our weight, several of the supports being wanting, and some of the stairs fairly gave way when stepped upon.

We reached the upper floor, however, in safety, and found it to consist of two large apartments, both in somewhat better condition than the lower rooms, having apparently been used as drawing-rooms or best bed-rooms. They were also without furniture, save an old rusty stove in the

centre of each room, and a grate on each hearth. In the back upper room there was a large, long chest, having a most ominous, coffin-like appearance, which Markham said was like the chests in which it was the custom to stow away the furs purchased from the Indians and hunters; and there was a deep cupboard in each room, in which were suspended some articles of female attire, almost dropping to pieces with age. The front upper room had but one window, like the room beneath; but there were three good-sized windows in the back room, in which many of the panes of glass were still entire.

Another broken and rotten staircase led to the rooms in the upper storey; but we had seen enough to satisfy our curiosity, and did not carry our inspection any farther at that time.

Descending to the ground floor, we mixed ourselves another glass of brandy and water, and, relighting our pipes, gathered the buffalo robes around us, in front of the blazing fire; and but for the nuisance of the bats, which still kept whirring among the rafters, and occasionally falling to the floor around us, we should have felt quite comfortable.

By this time it was seven o'clock—too early for us to compose ourselves to sleep; and we therefore sat smoking and talking, and listening to the storm which raged without. It had somewhat abated after our arrival, but had now recommenced with fresh fury; and the howling and wailing of the wind as it swept among the forest trees, and the occasional snapping and crashing of rotten and falling branches, had a wild, weird sound, which might well have frightened any one inclined to superstitious fears.

As usually happens under such circumstances, our conversation turned upon the superstitious fancies which prevail among ignorant people; and Markham was repeating various stories of this kind that he had heard from the French Canadians, when, in a temporary lull of the storm, I fancied that I heard the distant jingle of sleigh bells.

"Can't be," said Markham, to whom I mentioned what I had heard—"travellers are few and far between in this part of the world, and it is not likely that any one save ourselves is abroad on such a night as this."

"Listen!" said I.

But a heavy gust of wind, which shook

the old house to its foundation, prevented anything else from being audible; and when it lulled again all was silent.

"One fancies one hears all sorts of sounds in the forest at night," said Markham; "especially during such a storm as this. I have often lain awake and fancied—"

"Hark! It *is* the sound of sleigh bells, by Jove! Who can be abroad on such a night? It may be the young fellow we parted with to-day. Pray Heaven it is! Though he may never be able to find us, if it is he. Those bells are miles away, and the sound is borne down to us on the wind."

"Let us go to the door and shout," said I.

"Useless," replied Markham. "Our united voices wouldn't be audible against the wind a hundred yards away."

Nevertheless, for lack of any other means to make our presence known to the benighted traveller, we did go to the door, and ventured out into the storm, standing knee-deep in the snow, and shouting with all our might, though we knew perfectly well that the wind carried the sound of our voices in the opposite direction.

"Listen! I don't hear it now," said Markham. "It was most likely fancy, after all."

All did appear to be silent, except the howling of the storm, and we were about to close the door again, when the sound was heard more distinctly than before.

"It is certainly the jingle of sleigh bells," said Markham; "and coming nearer and nearer, too, though our shouts must have been inaudible to the traveller, whoever he may be. He's a mile and more away yet. I've learnt to judge of distance by sound during my experience in the backwoods; but he's coming directly towards us."

"Let us show a light," said I.

"No light that we can show would be discernible through this mist of falling snow," replied Markham. "It would require a perfect illumination to be visible any distance off. Listen! the sleigh is certainly coming nearer and nearer."

There was no doubt of this; for, though more than half an hour elapsed before we heard the tramp of the horse's hoofs on the hard-frozen ground in those spots from which the wind drifted the falling snow—so great was the distance of the traveller

from us—the sound of the bells grew more distinct every minute; and at length we distinguished the shouting of a human voice mingling with other sounds.

We now again shouted, hoping that our voices might be heard; and our shouts were responded to.

"Whoever he is," said Markham, "I fear it is not the poor young fellow who breakfasted with us this morning. It's some one evidently who knows the country well, and who has been making' directly for this spot ever since you first heard the bells."

He had scarcely spoken ere the traveller drew near enough for us to distinguish his voice and words—

"Thank God that I've got amongst human beings once more!" he cried. "I'd fairly given myself up for lost."

"Surely," said I, "that's Lieutenant Hoptown's voice!"

"It does sound like it," replied Markham. "But we shall soon know. Here he is."

The stranger drew up as he spoke, and by the light of the pine torch I carried, we saw that it really was our young companion of the morning.

"Hoptown, my dear fellow, welcome with all my heart and soul!" exclaimed Markham. "We have been speaking of you a dozen times since the storm set in, and you've hardly ever been absent from my thoughts. I had given you over for lost. Thank Heaven that you've been so fortunate as to light upon us thus!"

"Give me a hand out of the sleigh, please," said the young officer. "I am so stiff with cold that I've all but lost the use of my limbs. I can't feel the reins. The horse has guided himself. He must have seen your lights as well as I, and made for them of his own accord, otherwise I could never have guided him hither."

We scarcely took notice of this speech at the moment. It actually required both of us to lift the young man from the sleigh; another ten minutes' exposure to the intense frost, and all would have been over with him. In his desperate anxiety to make himself heard, he had raised his voice in shouts; but his speech, now that the dread and excitement were over, was hardly intelligible. I saw, by the torchlight, that the tip of his nose was already white, and in danger of being frost-bitten—if, indeed, it was not so already—and I caught up a handful of snow and rubbed his face with

all my might. Happily, sensation speedily returned to him, and I was soon relieved from anxiety on that point. After his limbs had been well rubbed, the blood again circulated freely through his veins, and we permitted him to approach the fire, from which we had hitherto kept him at a distance.

A tin cup of hot brandy and water completed the cure, and he was able to feel the comforts of his new position.

"By Jove!" he exclaimed, "I've had a narrow escape from being frozen to death."

"Narrow, indeed," replied Markham. "Ten minutes more, and you would have found shelter too late. But tell me, how came you to make for this place? You could have known nothing of its existence; it was, in fact, unknown to me, who have been in the country for years, until we stumbled upon it by mere chance to-night, just after darkness set in."

"I never should have found it but for your lights, and I believe my pony saw the lights as well as I," answered the young officer, almost repeating the words he had previously spoken. "Even then," he went on, "I little thought to meet you here, nor to find such a place as this. I thought I was approaching some large, regularly inhabited dwelling, not a deserted, dilapidated house in the wilderness."

"But you speak of our lights," said Markham; "you could not have seen our lights, for we showed none on the windward side of the house. Nor had we any to show that could have been of any service—nothing more than one of these pine torches, which, even if it had not been immediately extinguished by the wind, would have appeared but as a mere will-o'-the-wisp through the falling snow."

"I saw your lights through the windows, distinctly, three or four miles off," replied the lieutenant.

"Through the *windows*, my dear fellow," continued Markham, "impossible! In the first place there is, as you see, but one glassless window in this room; and the shutters, as you also perceive, are tightly closed, to exclude the wind and snow. Then, though I doubt very much whether the reflection of our fire through a glazed window—supposing that window to have been glazed, and the shutters open—so low as this window is could be seen a mile off, let alone three or four miles, it certainly could not

have been seen by you, approaching the house from the northward, since, as you perceive, it looks in exactly the opposite direction, and is shaded by the forest. No lights could be seen far away through the trees."

"I see that you are jesting with me, for some reason or other, though I don't see where the joke lies," replied the lieutenant, testily. "I saw no lights from the window of this room, but from three upper windows in the rear of the house, as I now perceive. I saw figures moving to and fro. It appeared to me that there were a dozen at least, dancing, as I thought, amidst a blaze of light, which fairly illumined the surrounding landscape. By Jove! I fully expected to find that some merrymaking was going on—a wedding celebration, or something of the kind; and I can swear that I saw females, or, at all events, I can swear that I saw one figure in female attire. I certainly was surprised when you so suddenly extinguished the lights, just as I came within hailing distance."

Both Markham and I protested firmly and distinctly that we had shown no lights from the rear of the house, and that it was impossible that the windows could have been lighted up.

The lieutenant, however, persisted in saying that we were jesting with him.

"You acknowledge," he said, "that there are three windows in the upper room in the rear of the house?"

Markham and I acknowledged that such was the case.

"Then how should I know that?" continued the lieutenant. "Do you still persist in asserting that that room with the three windows was not brilliantly lighted, and that you did not move swiftly to and fro—one of you attired as a female; though it appeared to me that there were a dozen persons in the room, at least? Were not you dancing, or engaged in some such amusement; and when I came near, after I had hailed you for the first time, did you not instantaneously extinguish the lights—leaving the place in what appeared to me, by the sudden and violent contrast, Egyptian darkness?"

Once more we solemnly asserted that we knew nothing of any lights such as those of which he spoke, and that we had only been in the room a few moments, immediately after our arrival at the house.

The young officer appeared at length to be convinced that we spoke in earnest.

"Then," said he, "I am either drunk or mad, or I have seen this night the strangest and most unaccountable sight I ever beheld!"

We endeavoured, but uselessly, to persuade him that he had been deceived by some illusion; that he had probably seen a will-o'-the-wisp, or jack-o'-lantern, or whatever term the Canadians apply to the marsh lights.

"Marsh lights, when the marshes are frozen over and deeply covered with snow!" he answered, derisively. "New as I am to Canada, you can't persuade me to that. No; illusion or no illusion, I saw what I have described to you, as distinctly as I see you now before me. I beheld the lights for an hour, at least. I was miles away when I first saw them; and they continued, as I have said, until I was close to the house. Then they were quenched as suddenly as gas can be turned off. I am not superstitiously inclined—I laugh at such follies; but I repeat that I saw figures pass and re-pass in rapid motion, and that there was at least one female figure among them. I was so near when the lights were extinguished, that if any one of the figures had stood still, facing the windows, I could plainly have distinguished its features.

"If, as you assert, it were mere fancy on my part, how came I, an utter stranger until to-day to this part of the country, to have made directly for this house, of the existence of which I was ignorant? How came I to know that there are three windows in the upper back room?"

The questions did not admit of reply. Nevertheless, to satisfy our guest—as I may term the lieutenant—and to convince him, and ourselves also, that we were the only occupants of the dwelling, we resolved to search all the rooms we could find in the upper portion of the house.

We therefore each provided ourselves with a lighted pine torch, and ascended the broken, rickety stairs, to the upper floor, one after another, keeping as close together as possible; for though our reason forbade us to place any faith in the marvellous stories relative to houses of this description, prevalent among the French Canadian habitants, and believed in firmly by them, and by many others who profess to disavow such superstitious fancies, we

could not help feeling an indescribable sensation of awe, as though we were surrounded by mystery, though we would have been ashamed to confess to any such feeling.

The rooms, however, as Markham and I felt assured of beforehand, were empty, as we had previously seen them, and in utter darkness, until lighted by the torches we carried.

The young officer gazed out of the windows into the surrounding darkness, and moved swiftly to and fro, to illustrate the movements of the figures or shadows he had beheld. Markham raised the heavy lid of the chest heretofore alluded to, and I narrowly searched the cupboards. Everything was as when we left the rooms, after our previous cursory examination; but the bottom of the chest, which had not previously been opened, was stained by some dark liquid, which appeared to have soaked into the wood until it had become completely absorbed, and which a superstitious person might have declared to be blood, but which, for aught we knew, might have been anything else—perhaps nothing more than the moisture which had, at some time long gone by, evaporated from fresh fur skins, left to remain a long time in the chest.

We then ascended, with much difficulty and some peril to our limbs, to the storey above, which consisted of two rooms, precisely similar to those beneath, save that the ceilings were not pitched so high.

These rooms were entirely devoid of furniture; but the cupboards, similar to those below, were absolutely filled with articles of male and female wearing apparel, all apparently rotting with damp and age; for the various garments appeared to have been but little worn, and some of the feminine apparel was of silk and of other costly material.

From this storey we mounted, by means of a broken ladder, through an open trap-door, to a loft with a low arched roof, beneath which, save in the centre, it was impossible for any one of us to stand erect. The floor of this room was strewn with rotten fragments of skins, from which the fur had almost completely disappeared. The stench arising from these fragments was noisome in the extreme; and as nothing else was to be seen in the room, we were glad to escape from it.

As we were again descending to the ground floor, Markham struck his foot against something lying near the chest, which proved to be a small, but heavy-headed hammer, with long and crooked claws.

This hammer must have lain where we found it while we were searching the room during our ascent, though it seemed strange that we did not previously perceive it; and now, on examining it narrowly by torchlight, we saw that the head was crusted with rust, of a deep red colour, and that a similar rust adhered to the claws, for the length of half an inch from their sharp points.

We descended to the ground floor, heaped our fire with fresh fuel, and arranged the buffalo robes, from the two sleighs, in such a manner as to form as soft and warm a couch for the three of us as we could have desired; and, having once more made some hot tea, slightly flavoured with brandy, of which grateful beverage we all partook in moderation, we refilled and relit our pipes, and reclining on our furry couch, arranged ourselves to smoke and chat in comfort until we should fall fast asleep. Previous to this, however, we looked abroad upon the weather. The snow had almost ceased to fall, and the moon was now and then seen faintly shining, as though she were endeavouring to struggle through the clouds which passed rapidly across her disc—a heavy, dark cloud sometimes completely obscuring her for a few moments, and causing the utter darkness which came over the landscape at such times, to contrast vividly with the previous light. There was every appearance of the weather clearing up before daylight; but the wind raged as furiously as ever, and some of the heaviest squalls seemed to rock the old house to its very foundation.

It was still early—not yet ten o'clock; and, reclining luxuriously on our robes, we rejoiced in the consciousness of security, and shelter from the storm that raged so wildly without, and felt more inclined to talk than to sleep.

Our conversation, naturally enough, under the circumstances, still harped upon the superstitions which prevailed amongst the French habitants; and, from speaking of these, we reverted to other superstitions, ancient and modern, which prevailed in other lands.

TABLE TALK.

IN "A General Sketch of the History of Persia" is the following:—"Fat-h 'Aly Shâh was himself a poet; and his Laureate was an old chief named Fat-h 'Aly Khân, whose ancestors had been for several generations the Governors of Kashan. It is related that one day the Shâh gave him some of his verses to read, and asked for his opinion of them. 'May my soul be your sacrifice,' said the Laureate, 'they are bosh.' The insulted sovereign exclaimed, 'He is an ass—take him to the stables.' And the order was literally obeyed. After a short time his Majesty sent for him again, and read some more of his verses. The poet walked off without a word. 'Where are you going?' cried the Shâh. 'Just back again to the stables,' cried the undaunted Laureate."

ONE OF THE candidates for a constituency is blessed (?) with an outrageously bad temper, and has the faculty for saying unpleasant things in the most unpleasant manner. An amusing story was related of him at one of the election meetings. Six barristers, as a frolic, agreed to dine together, each man inviting the most cantankerous man he knew. Dinner was provided, and of course laid for twelve—but only seven sat down; for each of the six had invited the same individual.

SOMEBODY HAS BEEN writing in one of the papers about the base sovereigns that are current—composed of platinum, and very hard to detect; and he goes on to say:—"At present, if a man offers a false coin, having a similar false coin in his possession, the statute throws upon him the onus of satisfactorily proving his own innocence. But, if many of these false sovereigns are about, it is quite possible that an innocent man should have two of them in his possession at once. Indeed, the only practical advice of which the position admits is that we should never accept a sovereign in change, except from our bankers." What practical advice! and what rich people we must all be! Pray, how many per cent. of our respectable population have banking accounts? We are reminded of the man in one of Mr. Gaskell's novels, who, out at dinner, was perfectly astounded that his hosts did not grow their own pineapples.

"No pinery!" he said, in accents of condolence. Let us all join in pitying the man without a banker; and yet two or three do manage to live—and die—without his taking charge of their little all.

WHEN WILL ALL theatrical managers cease to drive away their patrons with the nuisance caused by the fee system? Here is a specimen of the treatment met with at a metropolitan house. Opinions are various, and we have our own about the advisability of leaving our over-coat with an attendant. On going down to the stalls we were saluted with, "Leave yer great-coat here, sir." "Thanks, no." The attendant looked aghast, then indignant. "But it's the custom to leave yer great coat, sir." "Thanks, no." We were passed on to another attendant in the stalls, the first following close behind, when the following colloquy took place in the hearing of a score of people:—"Why didn't you tell him to leave his great-coat?" "I did, and he wouldn't." Then number two condescended to show us to a seat, and giving a programme, waited of course for the customary coin for that; and then wanted to supply us with an opera glass. At another theatre a short time since there was the following gauntlet to run, the writer not being alone—cloak-room, attendant for hats and coats, man with programmes, another with opera glasses, and another with footstools. Leaving alone the expense, is not this an intolerable nuisance?

AT HIS CONCERTS at St. James's Hall M. Gounod has made a step in the right direction, and one that the managers of theatres and other places of amusement might well emulate. No person is admitted during the performance, and he requests that persons wishing to retire will do so either before the commencement or at the expiration of a piece. How often is it that our attention is distracted by the advent of a party of three or four persons at a theatre, just in the middle of an act! It is not only most annoying to the audience, but must be equally so to the actors.

All Contributions are attentively considered, and unaccepted MSS. are returned on receipt of stamps for postage; but the Editor cannot hold himself responsible for any accidental loss. No unaccepted MSS. will be returned until a written application has been made for them.

ONCE A WEEK

NEW SERIES.

No. 322.

February 28, 1874.

Price 2d.

JACK'S SISTER; OR, WOMANLY PAST QUESTION.

CHAPTER XV.
AT HOME AGAIN.



AFTER-
NOON at the latter end of August, the sky a dazzling blue, the river glittering, the trees heavy with foliage, the roads white with dust.

Not a leaf quivering in the hot, still air; not a window shut in the hot, still streets. Flies buzzing on the panes, cattle huddled for shelter under the green shade of every kindly oak, or standing knee-deep and panting in the cool, clear water. Red and white striped blinds flourishing, à la Venetia, in villa and country house; magnolias making the air heavy with sweets; roses drooping their over-blown heads till the languid petals flutter one by one to the ground, and lie there in little rustling pink and crimson heaps. Outside the Leyburns' gate a tiny basket-work pony carriage—the pony fast asleep in the sunshine, and the boy who holds it ditto. Even King, the old Newfoundland, fain to lie on his side, with half a yard of red tongue hanging out at one end, and a tail, almost too languid to wave a welcome to his mistress, curled up at the other.

She was coming down the garden walk when King's half-open eye espied her,

walking as alertly, and looking as fresh, in her crisp lilac muslin and shady hat, as though it were the coolest evening of the year: waking the boy by taking the reins out of his hand, not waking the pony by a friendly little pat on the cheek; and springing lightly into her seat as she took the whip, chirruped to her steed, and was off, boy fast asleep again behind her; and King trotting in the rear of all, tongue still out and tail depressed, with an injured air, as of one obliged by conscience to do his duty, but not at all seeing the reason why.

As for Enid, who did know the reason, she was simply and entirely unconscious of the state of the weather, and indeed thought it rather well that there should be never a cloud in the blue, bright vault of Heaven, and that the sun should shine like a huge globe of molten flame upon the parched and scorching earth. It was a lovely day with her, nothing more; and what more proper than that Jack should have such lovely days to welcome his coming home; Jack who, after losing in the boat-race, had surprised them all by passing his examinations with the utmost decorum, and coming home in the early summer—not, indeed, with a first, but a second; which, as Enid said, was “simply wonderful, seeing that they had never heard of his studying at all. And how *did* he get it?” Of course, nothing but a double-first would content Merle after this; but meanwhile they could crow and chirp over Jack for not having failed altogether; and accordingly Enid crowed and chirped to her heart's content, and Merle joined her, making her doubly happy with his quick, kindly sympathy; and while owning that he had not expected such success, giving Jack double credit for it. Perhaps young Kinnardson knew better than the women what the difficulty of success had been; at any rate, it was one of the best traits in the junior cousin that he never

loved to chatter of other men's shortcomings, or undervalue their merits.

"I always told you Jack had good stuff in him, if he used it," Merle said. "If the boat-race had depended on him, we should have won it; for he is one of those steady-going fellows who are sure to come out well in the end." While to Jack he simply said, "I'm heartily glad, old fellow—I wish you joy;" and, what was more, looked the pleasure he expressed. But otherwise, Merle had seemed sadly out of health and spirits this summer—very gentle and quiet, but not caring to talk, or to go out to amusements; and making Enid very anxious about him in her own heart. She spoke to Aunt Jane at last, and Aunt Jane said "Bile," and proposed blue pill; but Merle declined to be blue pillled, and asserted that he was quite well; whereupon Miss Leyburn changed her mind sufficiently to add—

"Some love-sick folly, then. That's it, depend on it. Nothing affects the biliary arrangements so much," and set herself at once to find out the object. On this Merle got irritated; a quarrel ensued; and—it wanting only three weeks then to the end of the long vacation—he betook himself for the rest of that time to a literary friend at the Lakes. Enid was sorry, and thought him touchy. She was so used to being "managed" by Aunt Jane all her life, that she could not understand why young men of one and twenty should revolt from being taken care of and catechised as though they were still in petticoats.

Jack had departed before Merle. Clifton Gore was to leave town at the end of June, for two months' rambling among Black Forest scenery and Swiss mountains; and to Jack's intense delight, his father said, "Why not go too?" a suggestion almost too enchanting for the young man to believe in. The fact was, however, that Mr. Leyburn, though not given to crowing and chirping like his women folk, had been casting about in his mind for some reward which should repay Jack for the gratification he had given his family by not being plucked; and the young man's expression of face while reading aloud Clifton's letter, which contained more than one wish for his companionship, was sufficient index of what would be the reward of all others. Wherefore Mr. Leyburn said, "Why not go?" just as coolly as though it had not been settled

that Jack was to take his seat in the bank this summer, or as though his paternal heart had not been growing gay with the prospect of having his boy at home again for good.

Some men make such sacrifices, and say nothing about them. The world generally calls them surly old bears, and fights shy of them.

Mira la justicia del mundo.

Even Jack never guessed how much his father gave up in letting him go; and went off rejoicing, with a well-filled purse and a face like the sun at noonday; while Enid, who did guess, was careful not to breathe a word to her brother, lest she should spoil his pleasure; and only devoted herself more to the father, even speeding Merle's departure that she might be able to give herself up entirely to his entertainment and consolation. No one cast a thought to the blank she felt when both the boys were gone. Indeed, Mr. Leyburn told her jocosely he thought she seemed glad to get rid of them, she was so cheerful in their absence; whereat Enid smiled and—held her peace.

Now, however, the tour was over, and Jack coming back—not for good; he had promised to spend a fortnight with the Gores at St. Leonard's-on-Sea, before settling on to his stool in the bank; but Enid had written begging him to give them a look en passant, and Clifton promising to accompany him and spend a week at Marshton Fallows before joining his mother, the travelled hero had given gracious consent, in sequel to which had arrived a telegram at home on the 25th of August, containing these words:—

"Arrived at Dover, all well. Will be home by 5.30 train to-morrow."

Now, I trust you perceive the reason for Enid's selfish disregard of the weather in trotting out pony, dog, and boy under that flaming August sun. She was going to the station to meet the travellers, and bring them home in her own pony carriage—an institution in which she took no little pride, and which was her father's last birthday present to her.

Until the last two or three years Marshton Fallows had been one of those delightfully barbaric relics of mediævalism—a town without a railway, the nearest station being at Bibchester, nearly three miles off. But since then civilization had taken giant strides. Marshton Fallows had been granted

the honour of representation in Parliament; the Marston Fallowsites, casting an envious eye at Bibchester, had cried with a great cry—

“Why are not we even as others?”

And railway engineers, responding to the wail, had cut out a loop line along the green edge of those sunshiny hills, golden with gorse and fragrant with thyme, which made a wall to shelter Marston Fallows from the north winds; and had erected a brand-new little wooden station in a green and ferny hollow, where of erst some hermit had reared his cell, and left his name attached to a few lichen-covered stones, which the railway people, not being lovers of antiquity, utilized for their foundations.

Now, therefore, as a matter of course, the Marston Fallowsites, being satisfied in their desires, sat down and grumbled at the result, at the navvies for cutting up their farms and fields, at the smoke and noise, at the good folk drafted away, and the ill folk drafted into their quiet town by this new iron monster; in a word, at anything and everything of which they could lay hold to grumble about; while Enid Leyburn, who had quietly mourned over the innovation of this noisy stranger, desecrating and destroying the green and breezy hills of her childhood, no sooner saw it settled there than she found out hundreds of good things attached to or derived from it for which to thank God, in her sweet spirit of contentment; and on the present occasion felt most amiably to her old enemy for bringing Jack to the gates of his birth-place.

Of course she was too early. Is it not a well-known fact that women are always too early or too late? and what pupil of Miss Leyburn's could ever be the latter? The train was not even due till 5.30; and it was only six minutes past the hour when Enid sprang out of the pony carriage, and giving the reins to the boy, entered the station.

There was nothing for it but to wait; and the brand-new station boasting no accommodation beyond two iron-roofed platforms, smelling very strongly of roasting white paint, a couple of wooden benches, a pigeon house for the ticket collector, and another for the telegraph arrangements, Enid tried to compose her excited feelings by walking up and down the arrival platform, fortunately the shady one, and reading the advertisements which papered the

wall on either side with long lines of huge printing or gaudy illustration.

Blessed advertisements, how many a weary half-hour have ye whiled away, and how few of those you solace have had the common gratitude to think for one moment of investing any of their spare cash in the delights which you hold forth to their contemplation!

Would the train never come?

It was very hot, and Enid had read all the advertisements on her side twice over. It was no use seeking solace on the other side, for the glare of light from metal roof and well-scrubbed, white boards nearly blinded her. And after a long, wistful gaze down the narrow vista of steep chalk cutting, with its fringe of short, sweet grass, tufts of golden, prickly furze, wild pink geranium, and straggling trails of small, white-veined ivy crowning the summit and refreshing the eye after the contrast between the glaring white of the chalk and the glaring blue of the sky, she looked at her watch again, found that it still wanted ten minutes to the time, and went out to see how the pony, boy, and dog were faring in her absence.

They were all asleep: sound as churches—if any church can be called sound in these upsetting days—sleeping with a brutal insensibility to her impatience which would have irritated the most equable of minds.

“Not that one could expect much from Scrub,” as Enid said, alluding to the pony. “But you, King, I did think *you* would have cared a little bit! Don't you want to meet your master again, you unkind dog? Aren't you a bit glad to see him, when he is always so glad to see you?”

King opened the corner of one eye, flapped his big tail twice or thrice, as who should say—

“Yes, yes; but don't disturb me.”

And having made a small simoon by his exertions, closed the corner again, stretched out his four legs limply, and was asleep in a moment.

“You are a heartless old creature,” said Enid, reproachfully, and left him to his slumbers in disgust.

Surely the ten minutes were up now!

No, not yet; and when they were, the train was not. Full five minutes after the half-hour did Enid stand, watch in hand, trying not to think of all the dreadful accidents which might have happened to train and passengers; and then, she had just

turned to leave the platform for the purpose of tormenting the ticket collector with her fears, when there was a distant shriek, a roar, a rumble, a mighty rush and whirl, a tremendous tremble of the whole station, platform, benches and pigeon houses—a chorus of cries of “Marsh! flows! Marsh! flows! change for Erdley and Bibchester,” and behold, the whole line of teeming carriages and steaming engine had forged up alongside; and porters, guards, and passengers were hustling and crowding around her on the spot where a minute ago she had stood alone.

“Hallo! Jenkins, how are you?” cried a familiar voice, before she had time to look round for its owner. “Here, catch hold of this;” and a portmanteau was shoved out of a first-class carriage, followed almost immediately by the stalwart form of master Jack, bigger, if possible, and certainly stouter than ever, with a face tanned to the colour of red mahogany, and a thick pair of brown whiskers, “making him look quite important,” as Enid said to herself, with a thrill of gratified pride.

“Why, Gawd bless oi, if ‘taint Muster Jack,” cried the porter with genuine gladness, as he seized the portmanteau flung him. “An’ how be’ ee, zur? ‘Ee be grawn’ zurely. ‘Ee’ll find Muster Leyburn doin’ foinely an’— Why, lawks! ef here ben’t the dawg!”

Yes, there sure enough was King, having to all appearance scented his master from afar, leaping, whining, barking, wagging his tail, and licking Jack’s face and hands, in as great a frenzy of delight as if he had been living for nothing else during the last eight weeks; and welcomed by Jack with proportionate affection, as the only one of his family on the spot to meet him, while poor Enid was still trying, with ladylike unobtrusiveness, to work her way through the crowd to her brother’s side.

Need I say that, being two young English people, their greetings, when they did at last get together, were comprised in a simple—

“Well, Enid?”

“Well, Jack dear?”

And a grip of each other’s hand over King’s curly head.

“Please, when Jack is quite done, will Enid remember me?”

The voice—such a pleasant voice, too—startled her to the recollection that she was

expecting some one else; and looking up, with the blush of surprise and pleasure still lighting her face, she found herself confronted by a tall young man with laughing blue eyes, and the sunniest golden hair which ever God grew on a human head. He was holding out his hand with mock humility, and a smile whose mirthful sweetness recalled so forcibly the hero of her childhood, that she gave him both hers with another blush, quite distinct and different from the first, a blush she *felt*; and which was assuredly the first that man had ever caused to bloom on Enid Leyburn’s cheeks.

“Clifton, I beg your pardon. I did not see you; and yet,” with a frank, cordial look, “you are not at all changed. How are you?”

“Very hot and dirty; and very glad to see my old home and friends again,” Clifton answered, laughing; but taking critical note the while of the changing colour as contrasted with the clear, honest eyes, and pleased by the friendly, unaffected manner and cheerful tone which answered him.

“Then make haste to enter my carriage and four. Oh! don’t stare, Jack—it is really mine. And I have engaged to bring you both home in it, to the other old friends who are waiting to welcome you. Dear Jack, how good it is to see you again.”

Then the station being again empty, and Clifton looking the other way, she did venture on a little squeeze of Jack’s arm; which, being amicably responded to, they all marched off in triumph to the pony carriage. The boy was sent to look after the luggage; and after some discussion as to who should sit on the back seat—palpably too small for Jack, and, as Enid said, not the place for a guest—Jack settled the matter by observing—

“Then you sit there, Enid, and I’ll drive, and take Clif up beside me. It’s not half a mile there, and—”

“Jack!” shrieked Clifton, in horror, “will you never have a spark of chivalry? Miss Leyburn—Enid, I must call you by the old name—please let me apologize for my friend. The Black Forest has left him more of a bear than ever; and I assure you that, what with offering perpetual apologies for his offences against society, grovelling in the dust for his misdeeds, and blushing scarlet over his faux pas, my life has been a ‘hissing and a shame.’ I shall be quite grateful if you take him under your wing now. Allow me.”

And our heroine found herself lightly lifted to her proper place, the reins settled in her hand, and the rug tucked nattily over her flounces with a dainty care to which she was quite unaccustomed. Clifton's lightest touch with a woman was always like a caress; and Enid had not disappointed his expectations. He was up in the back seat, laughing and joking, before Jack had time to settle himself beside his sister.

Was there ever such a merry drive home? The young men keeping up a constant fire of innocent chaff, and nodding every moment in answer to some greeting from the roadside; and did Aunt Jane and Mr. Leyburn ever look so young and genial, as they stood together on the steps when the pony carriage drew up with a dash outside the hall door, and the occupants sprang out to receive their hearty greeting? Such a coming home was worth baking for.

As for Enid, it seemed to her that she had never known so lively a dinner party or so cosy an evening in all her life; and the only grave shade that crossed her face was when Clifton, in his cordial way, asked after Merle. What a pity he could not be of the party! Mr. Leyburn opened a couple of bottles of champagne to drink a welcome to the travellers; and coffee was partaken of later under the great walnut tree on the lawn, Jack and Clifton reposing in the ancient Roman fashion at their young hostess's feet, and fighting over their rival exploits in Alpine climbing for her amusement—Clifton insisting in dealing in Baron Munchausen to a perfectly stupendous extent, and completely taking in Aunt Jane by the solemnity of every feature except the rebellious eyes, which *would* flash up saucily into Enid's face as she sat laughing and teasing him by encouraging Jack in his obstinate efforts at stating the "real facts of the case."

Later on, however, when Aunt Jane had subsided into a quiet little doze, when the moon was up, and glow-worms flitting hither and thither, like living sparks, in the warm, flower-scented air, Mr. Leyburn managed to absorb his son to himself, and Enid coaxed Clifton to sing some of the "Lieder" about which he had been talking. He made little demur, not caring to show off any youthful affectations about a power which was so often called into requisition; and Enid almost gasped with ecstasy as the sweet, rich notes rose like a very chorus of nightingales over the leaves and flowers,

dying away in lingering echoes which made her heart thrill in strange, pathetic delight. She quite forgot to thank him when he had done, and sat so still and quiet that Clifton thought he had bored her, till, turning his head quickly, he saw something which made his pulses throb with a keener gratification than any honeyed flatteries in London drawing-rooms had ever afforded him. The moon was just piercing the closely interlaced boughs of the walnut tree with a silver arrow, and that arrow glistened on one great pearly tear, which stood like a big raindrop on either fair cheek.

He went to bed that night wishing that he had a sister like Jack; and half inclined to quarrel with his Fidus Achates for taking so coolly that loving good-night kiss. And yet she was no beauty. He had told himself so in the first critical glance—no beauty in any sense of the word. He fell asleep, and the grey eyes haunted him all night, and smiled on him in frank, sweet welcome when he came down in the morning.

That week passed all too quickly, in its quiet home mirth, and pleasant outings to revisit all the old childish haunts by wood and river. Mr. Leyburn, it is true, claimed Jack's company to himself on various occasions, thus throwing Clifton exclusively on Enid for entertainment; but the young man bore his fate with serene equanimity, and used to carry his young hostess's work-basket to the seat under the walnut tree, and throw himself on the turf beside it to read aloud, or take his place at her side in the little pony carriage, with a surprising amount of contentment, or what would have been surprising to any one who was not aware of his partiality for feminine society.

Enid was aware of it, and therefore would never have thought of treating her guest's eager attentions as any special compliment to herself, even if she had been in the habit of thinking of herself in that manner at all. Clifton was Jack's friend, and she was Jack's sister. What need for further explanation of his undisguised satisfaction in her society? Besides, the weather was unusually hot, and his stay necessarily brief enough to dispense him from those visits of friendliness or compliment which Aunt Jane was always urging him to pay.

"When I come next I'll be good; but, dear Miss Leyburn, I want to be happy with you now," he said, coaxingly.

And what could the flattered spinster urge in answer? In truth, happy as his life had been, he had never enjoyed quite this sort of happiness before—intimate companionship with a family united by the closest bonds of warm, trusting affection; well-bred, cultivated, and yet simple, unworldly people, who treated him as one of themselves from the first day; daily and hourly intercourse with a girl who met him frankly and fearlessly, as though he were her brother more than her brother's friend; let him see into the depths of her pure, gentle soul, in utter unconsciousness of there being anything there worth regarding; and whilst making the sunshine of her home, the minister to every one's comforts, and the bearer of every one's troubles, could hold her own in the outer world with a modest dignity, a gracious, maidenly reserve particularly delightful to this young aristocrat, whose fastidious tastes were too often offended by the flippancy and freedom of more fashionable damsels.

Was he becoming smitten?

Worse!

Unsuspected by any one—least of all by the girl herself—with his eyes wide open, with no delusion of flirtation, no allurements of beauty, wit, or fascination, without even the spur of rivalry from others or shyness from the object herself, Clifton Gore fell in love, really and truly, for the first time in his butterfly life; and, also for the first time, strove to conceal and conquer his passion, from an utterly novel sense which overpowered him at the very times when he was feeling the sweetness of her presence more strongly than usual.

The sense of *unworthiness*!

It was so great that he could not even have borne that Jack should guess his presumption—the presumption of loving an unpretending young woman, who did not shine with any remarkable brilliance even in the modest circle of an old-fashioned country town; and, whilst bitterly regretting that he should have lowered himself in young Leyburn's woman-scorning eyes by his frequent confidences respecting previous flames of various degrees of caloric, took care to hint nothing of his present feelings, and treated Enid with a touching deference, an affectionate respect, almost beyond that which he paid to the "little mother."

And Enid? Enid liked him—liked him very much, and showed it in simple, unaf-

fected gladness at his presence. The grey eyes looked quite woeful when the time came for the young men to say good-bye.

"It is only till Christmas," Clifton said, with unconscious pathos, as he held the kind, white hand a trifle longer than was necessary.

"And Merle will be here then," Enid answered, brightly.

Did she think that an inducement for his return?

THE CASUAL OBSERVER.

LOOKING INTO IT.

YOUR contributor, who tries very hard to go through life with his eyes wide open, his mental note-book ready, and the pencil of his observation sharpened to a point that is pungent, has of late been much exercised in his mind concerning what it is the fashion to call spiritualism. He one day purchased a weekly periodical devoted to this subject, and in reading it made his hair stand on end, like the very sharp, coarse fur of an animal mentioned by the father of a gentleman who lived some time since in Denmark.

He, moreover, found therein that this spiritualism was here treated in a religious fashion, larded with texts, sauced with hymns, served with prayer, and treated altogether as if it were a new revelation—the great religion that is to eclipse all others, and lead men's minds to that which is right and good.

Your contributor found, moreover, accounts of several séances, during which a medium went into a dark chamber, and played a sort of cerebro-photographic game at developing the glasses of the spectators' and auditors' minds, producing for them a series of pictures most striking and startling in effect. Spirits were raised up, too, from the vasty deep; and, apparently, after death all essences, after leaving this vile body, are resolved either into two great divisions, or into two single beings or doings (more probably the latter, since they are consummate actors), called Katie and Tom King.

Now, all this seemed to your contributor to be passing strange. He was somewhat, to use Captain Cuttle's expression, "taken aback," especially when, upon making inquiry and research, he found that there were scores, hundreds—nay, thousands—of

people ready and willing to believe in all set forth in the spiritualistic periodicals; and that, so far from this being an ephemeral affair, it is one ever on the increase, and taking a great hold upon the minds of men, and a greater hold upon those of women.

It happens that your contributor is a man of a sceptical turn of mind. Of course it is much to be regretted, but he always wants to know *why*, and is not satisfied if he does not find out. He may stand absolutely alone, though he does not think he does, in being ready to obstinately decline to believe in any one nowadays performing what is called a miracle—in fact, he would like to see it done, and examine as to whether the performer of the miracle had any apparatus. Not so very long ago—three or four years, maybe—he did go to see miracles performed, one very hot day, at a hall in Newman-street, where an American doctor was for hours besieged by the halt, the lame, and the blind; the said doctor standing in his shirt-sleeves, with the perspiration pouring down his face, manipulating a most pitiful array of sufferers—paralytics, rheumatics, the dumb, deaf, and blind. He touched them at the rate of from a hundred to a hundred and fifty an hour, and they came up one side of the hall and passed out by the other—cured?

Your Casual Observer never heard that they were; but then he is, as he has confessed, notoriously sceptical about novelties. He is a fair specimen of the burnt child who fears the fire; in fact, your contributor has, to use a homely phrase, “been humbugged,” and strongly objects to being humbugged again. But, for all this, he is reasonable, and a progressionist. He strongly believes that there are a great many wonders yet to be discovered by those who will study Nature after the fashion of our great scientific men. He is fully aware of the fact that we are in constant contact with wonders which can well hold their place with the inventions of the storytellers of old. No magician of ancient lore ever did anything more striking than conveying to us, ready for our reading at breakfast, the speeches made in Parliament last night—nay, the news of what took place yesterday in Bengal. The chemist of to-day is a sage who would have given Aladdin's uncle fifty points in a hundred, and beaten him easily; and as to the witches and their magic mirrors, we can give them Pepper any day. Your contri-

butor, then, does not deny the existence of marvels; and what is more, he thoroughly believes in the existence of marvels yet undiscovered. And therefore, after due cogitation, due listening, and due reading, he came to the conclusion that he would much like to see and hear what there was in the spiritualistic movement—whether it was all wheat, whether it was all chaff, or whether it consisted of a few grains of wheat buried in a heap of rough, husky, useless chaff, sold to the public as a genuine nutritious article, and in too many instances taken and devoured blindfold.

The determination come to, your contributor made inquiries, and finding that a séance was to be held under the presidency of a medium of some fame, he set off one evening and walked to the place.

There was a shady sound about the announcement that the charge for admission was half a crown. There was an air about it of “backseats, one shilling; reserved seats, two shillings; chairs, half a crown”—an announcement that the reader may have seen at the bottom of the synopsis of a lecture to be delivered in some country town. Your contributor, however, waived that, telling himself that it was necessary to keep the affair select and free from rough intrusion. He dived into his pocket without a word, drew forth and tendered the coin, and—was refused admittance!

No reason was assigned; only a firm and respectful bearing was assumed, and the doorkeeper seemed to silently declare that he could smell your Observer's scepticism as plainly as if it had been musk.

Your contributor was foiled but not beaten. It was too late to take further steps abroad that night, so he naturally turned his thoughts “tew hum,” also his legs; and arriving there, startled the neighbours of his hive by the strangeness of his proceedings.

He says the neighbours—let us say two of the neighbours, for that was the number brought to bear in his experiments. He first called to mind that which he knew concerning the process of dumb incantation, and remembered that spirits have a partiality for that Golgotha or place for a skull called a hat.

A hat was brought, and we will not give the maker's name, lest this should be looked upon as an advertisement. The hat was placed upon a small table, the gas was

not turned down, and your contributor and his two companions arranged their outstretched fingers round the brim of that hat—fingers touching fingers, thumbs touching thumbs—so that a circle was formed round the under part of the brim. Then they waited in silence for a manifestation.

A minute—two minutes—three minutes—four minutes.

The following were the results: a gradually increasing aching pain at the back of the neck, another at the small of the back, and a very strong desire to give the task up and sit down.

At first there was a disposition to laugh at the novelty of our position, quelled, however, by the knowledge that we were calmly trying to investigate a something that was either very singular, or else a complete delusion and trick, fostered by charlatans. Then came a slight touch of that shuddering sensation that affects the back during the recital or reading of a powerfully told ghost story. Your Observer suffered this, as did also the others; and acknowledged it when afterwards comparing notes. Lastly came a feeling of wonder as to whether we were doing right in thus trying to find out something of the unseen, to plunge with prying eyes into the great void beyond ordinary ken—a feeling this, innate and fostered from the days when, as children, we believed in "Old Bogey." Such a feeling, perhaps, as may have been felt by great philosophers when launching their barques to make discoveries. Even Franklin may have flown his silken kite with a slight shiver of dread lest the fire he sought to draw down from heaven might lay him low.

At last, fully five minutes had elapsed, and our intent eyes met—each seeming to ask the question—

"Shall we give it up?"

The same spirit—I speak of ordinary, not extraordinary, spirits here—moved us with the determination to try for a minute longer, and we tried; but before one-half that time had elapsed, it was as if a strong, firm hand had taken the hat by the brim, and, with a steady, slow pressure, screwed it four or five inches round to the right, taking our hands with it; and before we could recover—(nay, suppose your Observer keeps to the first person singular—himself)—before I could recover from my surprise, there was another quiet, steady pressure apparently brought to bear, and the hat moved round a little farther.

"Well," I said, "I vow I did not move it."

"Nor I! Nor I!" said the others.

"It's comical."

"It's very strange."

"I never saw anything like—there, it's off again!"

It *was* off again, and in the most unaccountable manner; for that hat heaved, as it were, beneath our touch, as if filled with some gaseous force which was nearly, but not quite, strong enough to master our pressure. I can compare it to nothing better than the sensation that would be felt if three persons joined hands over a tin can floating in water, pressing it down till its buoyancy acted as a strongly resisting power, and the vessel heaved and tried to escape, first on one side, then upon the other.

"It is very strange," one of us said again.

"Don't speak," said the other, in a tone of voice which showed how much he was impressed; "it might break the spell."

But all the same there seemed no spell to be broken, for the hat turned gently, now more and more, not regularly, but by jerks, till we—keeping our hands in the same relative position—had completed the circuit of the little table, and stood upon somewhere about the spot from which we started.

And now once more the heaving and turning commence, at one moment vigorously, the hat making quite a glide upon the table, the next moment in a hesitating, weak way, but always turning a little more and a little more until it had, as it were, forced us to make a second circuit of the stand, my fingers all the while seeming to be glued to the hat-rim.

Suddenly one of my companions snatched his hands away, took out his handkerchief, and began wiping them hastily.

We then withdrew our own, stood and looked at one another, then stood and looked at the hat.

"Well," I said, "I'll hang this up. I suppose we have done with it for to-night?"

"If you leave it alone," said the owner, "it strikes me that it will go and hang itself up, and choose the peg that's farthest from the draught."

"Not it," I said; "the magic power has gone." And I took up the hat.

"Magic power, indeed!" said its owner. "I think you had better burn it, for I'll never again trust my head within its rim."

The hat was a very light one, and re-

sounded as I tapped it lightly on the crown; while my other companion looked in it curiously, and examined the lining, as if expecting to find some jugglery or mechanism by which it had been stirred.

There was nothing, however, to be seen; and the puzzlement increased, bringing with it, however, food for thought.

"Why do you keep on wiping your fingers?" I said to my friend.

"Was I wiping them?" he said, hesitatingly. "Oh, it was to get rid of the unpleasant feeling. Don't you notice anything?"

"I must confess that I do," I said—"a peculiar soft, tingling sensation, as if something were running from the tips of my fingers right up my arms."

"That's precisely what we feel," said the others.

And then we all agreed that it was very strange, sitting down to talk the matter over; for we did not feel disposed to try any more experiments with the hat for the present.

We had not learned much; but we had arrived at one fact—and that was, that under certain conditions a hat would move in a very peculiar manner.

But those conditions? Was either of us trying to hoax the others? Had one of the party increased the pressure and applied it in a lateral fashion, so as to produce the turning motion?

I grant the possibility of this, if one of us had been so disposed; but the heaving and swaying motion could not have been achieved. Granting one phenomenon, we saw no reason for doubting the other.

"It is curious," said one of us. "Then are we to set it down as the work of spirits?"

"Well," said the other, "I am ready to acknowledge the existence of spirits; but why, when under certain circumstances an inert body—a hat—is endued with motion, should we attribute that motion to spirit influence? It seems to me that we have for ourselves discovered that the hat will move, and also that it leaves a strange tingling sensation in the nerves after we have removed our fingers from the brim. What we have to do, then, is to find out why these phenomena occur; for it is perfectly childish to set down every fact that is not reducible to the scope of our present knowledge to spiritualism."

"I agree with you," I said, "that there

are still a few things to find out in this little world of ours."

"At a venture, I should say," he continued, "that under certain circumstances a portion of the life force—vitality, moving power, call it what you will—of the human being is conducted by the extremities of certain human beings touching for a time any inert lifeless mass; and so long as the mass is charged with that force, a kind of motion is contained by it, more or less under the control of the beings from whom that force proceeded."

"But," said the other, "how are we to find this out?"

"By patient investigation, possibly—that is, if the theory be right. Let us go on, and try all the various plans that we can learn; and do it in a quiet, scientific spirit. That there is some new force, I am inclined to think; for, as before said, it is too childish to set everything down that we cannot comprehend to the workings of the disembodyment."

"Then it is an understood thing," I said, "that we meet here again in a few days, and try what we can find out?"

"Exactly so," was the reply.

And my friends left; the owner of the hat sticking it on manfully, and giving it a decisive and rather jaunty rap to keep it on, as much as to say—

"Who's afraid?"

OUR DAUGHTER PATTY.

CHAPTER IV.

ONE afternoon I bethought me it was a long time since I'd been outside the front door. Patty was in a nice comfortable doze; so I got Elizabeth to sit in her room, told her about the medicine in case I shouldn't be back in time to give it, put on my bonnet and shawl, and went round to have a chat with Mrs. Brown.

I wasn't away above half an hour and ten minutes at the outside. I took off my things, and went into Patty's room. After I'd spoken a few words to Elizabeth, she gathered up her work and went down to the parlour, to be with father. I gave Patty her medicine, and fancied then I noticed her hand was hot and trembled a little, and that her face was flushed. I was putting the room to rights a little, when she called me.

"Yes, dear," said I. "What is it?"

And I came to the bedside.

"Mamma, who sends me those grapes?" said she.

"Bob Brown, my darling," said I; "and very good it is of him. They must be at least four-and-six a pound, this time of year."

"And the flowers?" asked she.

"Yes, love. Bob sends those too, and comes himself every day sure as the clock to ask after you, and see if he can do anything for us. Isn't it kind of him?"

I was glad to praise Bob, for I was really grateful to him.

Patty was silent for a little time, and then she turned her great eyes to me and said—so low I could hardly hear her—

"Does Mr. Darrel never come, mother?"

"He's not here, pet; he's gone back to London. There, don't talk any more, but try to get to sleep a bit," said I, for I began to feel frightened—the child looked so strange.

"Mother, tell me," she said. "I can't sleep till I know for certain. Is it true—is it—what Elizabeth said just now about—about—oh! mother"—and she raised herself and threw her arms round my neck and hid her face on my breast, sobbing—"oh! mother, is he going to be married?"

"Hush, hush, my darling; don't give way so, my precious," I said, kissing her and trying to soothe her. "There, my love, don't; there are as good fish in the sea—Patty, my pet, don't; there's father and your old mother left to love you yet;" for the child was shaking with sobs, and I was beside myself, fearing lest she'd do herself some harm.

It was a good while before I could quiet her, and at night she was back in the fever again, and I had to listen to the sweet innocent babbling, with Mr. Darrel's name for ever on her lips.

Oh! how I blamed myself as I sat there through those weary nights. It was easy to see now what a fool I'd been. If I had but warned Patty! But I, her mother, had let her walk into all this trouble without so much as lifting my little finger to stop it; and, indeed, until that very day I'd known nothing of it all.

Why hadn't I found out all about him before Patty got so fond of him? Of course I didn't know it was more than a flirtation; but then young men that were already engaged to other girls ought not to be let even to flirt with Patty, and he'd led her on to thinking of him, too. Didn't I see him

beg her for the flower out of her hair that night of the Browns' dance?—Bob's flower and all. Well, well, I was the one to have seen to it, and instead I'd been priding myself on the fine lover my poor girl had picked up.

I was a miserable woman in the days that followed, when Patty's life was again despaired of, more down-hearted and wretched than in the days that went before; for I couldn't tell father anything about it. I had to keep it all to myself.

Patty had a wonderful constitution, the doctor said; for even now she did not die. But, oh! it was a sad, strange Patty that came back to us. Her beautiful hair was all gone, and the pretty face—I can't write about it; let us thank Heaven that we have her at all.

It was days before she began to mend, and weeks before she left her bed. Even then such care as we had to take of her. Father carried up his own easy chair, I remember, that first afternoon Dr. Smith said she might sit up a bit; and we propped her up with pillows.

Father hadn't been so like himself not for weeks, and I declare it was quite pitiful to see our Patty trying to smile at his fun, poor child! because she knew it would please him to have his jokes laughed at—so merry as father was, and such wan, tearful smiles as Patty's were! It was heart-breaking, upon my word it was, to look at her now, and think what she was a month or two back.

Patty didn't get strong so quickly as I should have liked, and father and I made up our minds we'd take her away to the seaside a bit, as soon as ever she could bear the moving.

One day, I recollect it well, for it was Anne's day out, and I was near giving her warning well as I liked her, for she actually never came home till a quarter to ten, though she knew well that nine was her hour—and I would have done it, too, for it wasn't the first time Anne had served me like that, only father and I'd arranged that if Patty got on as well as she was doing, we might get away towards the end of the week, so I didn't want an upset in the house just then.

Well, Patty was sat comfortably in father's chair by the fire, with a book on her lap, though she didn't seem to be reading much. Elizabeth was out district visiting—Tuesday was always her day—and father had just

gone for a breath of fresh air, as he said; but I knew quite well that meant a smoke, for father didn't get his pipe regular at all now, on account of Patty not being able to stand the smell of the tobacco.

I began to rack my brain for something to talk to Patty about. I used to tell her all the stories of my young days, and such like I could think of, to 'liven her up a bit; for she would sit hours if she was let, doing nothing in the world but thinking and thinking—and I felt quite sure it wasn't good for her, poor girl!

I'd just remembered a story mother used to tell me that always made me laugh—about something that happened to her when she was a girl—when there came a knock at the door, and I had to go and open it.

It was Bob Brown come to inquire after Patty, and bring a lovely nosegay and a little basket with some jelly in it, that Jane Brown thought Patty might fancy. Very kind it was of Jane, though I hope she didn't think we couldn't make jellies ourselves. But whether or no, it was good-natured of her; and every one knows that sick folks often relish things more coming in unexpectedly that way than what's made purposely for them.

I was standing talking to Bob, when I heard Patty calling to me—so thin and changed as her voice was. Bob, I could see, quite started when he heard it.

"Wait a minute," said I to him. "I'll bring you back the basket."

I went quickly into the parlour.

"Were you wanting anything, Patty?" I said.

"Is that Bob Brown?" asked she. "I think I should like to see him."

I was quite delighted, for Bob was that cheerful, I knew he'd brighten her up if any one could.

"Would you, dear? That's right. He's brought you these flowers, and his mother has sent some jelly—hum! it's a darker colour than mine, but I dare say it won't eat amiss."

I'd got it out of the basket—a pretty little mould it was, but I never think that dark jelly looks as nice as the pale. Mine was always a lovely light yellow.

I went and told Bob, Patty wished to see him. He looked so pleased.

"You'll find her very much altered; but whatever you do, don't let her see that you think so, if you can help it."

"Trust me, Mrs. Gibson," said he, and walked into the parlour after me, straight up to Patty.

"How d'ye do, Patty? I'm very glad to see you downstairs again," he said, taking her poor thin little fingers in his; and for all he spoke so calm, I saw his lip tremble, and his face flushed nearly as much as Patty's. And well he might be shocked—I don't wonder at it, such a wreck as poor Patty looked then.

"I wanted to see you," said Patty, "to thank you for your kindness. Won't you sit down and talk to me a bit, Bob? I was so afraid we should go away without my seeing you."

"Were you, Patty?" said he, and he took a chair close beside her. "Mother told me you were all going off to the sea. Where are you thinking of going, Mrs. Gibson?"

"Well," said I, "it's not quite settled. Father thought Margate 'ud be a nice lively place; but we must see what Dr. Smith says. Maybe it 'll not be mild enough there for Patty this time of year. I thought of Torquay or somewhere about there."

"That's the place," said Bob—"it's always mild down south. You'll soon get up your roses there, Patty."

"I see you won't let me thank you," said Patty, with her little quavering smile. "But there's something I must say. I've had a great deal of time for thought lately, and I want to tell you I'm so sorry I was so rude to you that day—you know—and you've been so kind to us, Bob. I couldn't go away without telling you this."

"Nonsense, Patty—kind to myself, you mean. I couldn't do less than come and inquire after you, when it was our Emmy got you to go on the ice at all. Could I, Mrs. Gibson?"

"Come and inquire? Well, no," said I; "but then you and the rest of your family have been kind to us in other ways besides. I know I feel grateful to you all, and I'm sure Patty does too."

"There, there, Mrs. Gibson, say no more about it. You make me feel how little one can do for—for"—and then he turned it off. "By the way, Patty, how did you like that last book I sent you?"

"Very much. But there's one other thing I want to say to you—at least, I mean that I want you to do for me" (and I couldn't think whatever the child was about—she seemed so nervous, and her face flushed so

while she fumbled about in her pocket, and I saw her take out her purse). "Will you, Bob, will you be so good as to send this back to your friend, Mr. Darrel?"

Her lips were trembling so, she could hardly speak; and then I saw it was the little hoop of pearls she'd had sent to her on Christmas Day she was holding out to him.

"I don't know the address. Will you send it, Bob?"

"Why, Patty," cried Bob, "I sent you that myself, for a Christmas present. I thought——"

"You! you! Oh, Bob! what a weak, foolish girl I have been!" and Patty threw up her hands to her face and fell sobbing. "Oh! Bob, what must you think of me?"

I got up to run to her, but before I could move there was Bob on his knees by her side, and her head on his shoulder.

"Think, my poor darling?" said he, stroking her hair; and his voice shook so I could scarce hear it. "I think this is your place, love, and I think——"

But Patty wouldn't listen to him; she raised herself out of his arms.

"No, no, Bob, I didn't mean that; but I am so weak, and I thought I could be so strong," she sobbed.

I was that dazed I stood stock still staring at them.

"Hush, love. For God's sake, don't send me away again," said Bob.

"You don't know, Bob. I'm not worth your love now. I've been so wicked and foolish," sobbed Patty. "Look at me, what a wreck I am! See! You can't love me—oh, you can't! And when you come to know— It's impossible. You can't—you can't! I hate myself. How can you——"

"Stop, Patty. Hush, love; you'll break my heart. I know, darling, what you want to tell me."

And there was Patty in Bob's arms again.

I stole away out of the room, and went straight upstairs, and began crying like a baby.

When I came down to see about tea, Bob was still there, and he stayed all the evening.

"Couldn't leave Patty," he said; and Patty, though she was so quiet, I could see liked him to stay.

Father was that pleased, I never saw him go on so. Said he knew all along how it would be, though how he could say so passes me altogether. Even Elizabeth didn't seem

so surprised as I should have expected. Anne, when she heard it, was quite beside herself with the thoughts of a wedding in the house, though I told the silly girl it couldn't possibly be for months.

I had a long talk with Patty that night, and she told me that Bob had asked her long ago—on the night of the party—but she wouldn't have anything to say to him then one way or the other. He'd never given up hoping, but had meant to wait till we came back from the sea before asking again, only he told Patty he couldn't help himself.

Patty said he told her he'd guessed, from putting this and that together, how it had been about Mr. Darrel, but not until it was too late.

She said he was so good and kind, and blamed himself for not making sure she knew of Mr. Darrel's engagement, and those that led her on to think what she did; but said never one word of blame to her.

And then Patty went to the glass and looked at herself, and cried, and said she'd so little to give him in return for all he was giving her.

She told me how she had meant to live out her life unmarried, and try to do good among the poor; although she'd come to know of late that Bob was dearer to her than all else in the world besides.

She put the little ring on her finger; and I saw her, when I'd said good night and was going to turn down the light, put it to her lips and kiss it.

Late that autumn, Bob and Patty were married; and though Patty was quieter than she used to be, I will say this for her, that she didn't look amiss as a bride. With her hair brought well down on her brow, one could scarce see the scar; and each year one'll notice it less, I suppose. At all events, Bob doesn't seem to care much about it.

I let Anne go to them, for she'd got that fond of Patty; besides, I know what strange servants are with young housekeepers, taking such liberties, the idle jades. I've changed twice since then, and the one I've got now is under notice to quit. I'm not one to stand their vagaries, and that I'll show them.

I was at Patty's house the other day, and a nicer little house and a happier couple you wouldn't meet in a day's march.

Father says he "can see as far through a stone wall as most people," and that it won't

be long before there's another wedding in the family. I don't know how that may be; certainly, Mr. Canter comes dropping in very often of an evening, and Elizabeth seems to like it too.

Patty has made us all promise to spend next Christmas Day at her house; but however many Christmases I spend, I'll never, no, never forget the fright I got on that Christmas Day when I thought we'd lost our daughter Patty.

THE END.

ME AND MY DOGS.

JORUM.

THERE is something very free and jovial in the life of such a dog as Jorum, who came to and went from the village just as he pleased. I feel sure that he must have looked down with a lofty contempt upon all pet dogs with fancy collars—all daintily washed, cleanly creatures, led about by chain or string, and upon the inhabitants of those high-peaked, gable-ended, green kennels in the various yards he passed. He was nobody's dog, was Jorum; and when the new dog tax came in force, but for my well-known dislike to the whole dog tribe, I might have been tempted to pay the required five shillings for making him free. I knew Jorum well, and entertained a certain respect for him; for he was an honest, upright dog, with one exception—he would poach. It seemed strange that he should have led such a vagabond life, for there was good blood in Jorum's veins, though no doubt his ancestors must have married and intermarried with many families; there was many a point, though, in which could be traced his descent, though so dissolving, as it were, into other points, that it required study to thoroughly know Jorum's points, let alone his characteristics. There was a trifle of the length of leg and muscular development of the greyhound, the heavy lips of the mastiff, the heavy front of the bull and its broad chest; while his grey, rugged coat spoke of descent from the Scottish colley. No one could ever have committed himself so far as to say that Jorum was a handsome dog—he was anything but that. But he was a dog of mind and purpose, a dog that the bitterness of life never troubled, and who took things as they came—basked in the sunshine and en-

joyed it, shook off the raindrops of the wet days, and disdained to shiver.

He was nobody's dog; but in turn Jorum had many masters, and would do an odd job for anybody. He would help a drover with his sheep for miles along the road, and then sit in front of him at a roadside public-house, and catch most cleverly the morsels of bread and scraps of cheese rind pitched to him by way of payment; while a small puddle of beer poured for him in a corner would be lapped up with gusto. But the meal ended, and the flock of sheep beyond a certain limit, Jorum turned back, while no amount of coaxing would get him on another step. With drovers, a certain number of miles on each side of the village formed his beat; and the extremity reached, Jorum trotted back. Flaire, the butcher, never thought of going to market without Jorum, who was always to be found waiting outside the shop ready for the butcher on those particular days, ready to fetch home a bullock, whose paunch Jorum knew would be his reward; and Flaire was always most scrupulous in his payments.

"I'd keep him altogether, sir," said Flaire, "for a more excellent dog never lived; but he won't stop."

Not he. Jorum loved change. Not that he was idle; but his soul revolted at the thoughts of chains, kennels, and slavery.

Another job of Jorum's was to fetch Mrs. Temse's cows up at milking-time from off the common, and this task he would execute night and morning with the greatest of regularity, gratefully lapping up the bowl of buttermilk which he had for recompense. There was no driving there, either going or coming back, for a regular understanding seemed to exist between Jorum and the great teeming-uddered cows. Morning and evening, wet or dry, there would be Jorum outside Mrs. Temse's door. "Now, Jorum," she would cry; and up would jump the dog, and trot slowly off down the lane towards the common, where he would be stopped by the gate; but here he would turn off and run up to a cottage door, wag his tail, and look up at the face of any one he encountered; when, his wants being known, generally speaking, a child would run down and open the gate, stopping and swinging till Jorum returned with the cows. The dog could easily enough have got through, but the object was to get some one at the gate to open it when he came back with his

charge. And there was no driving here. Jorum would get the cows together, and then slowly march back, the quiet old animals following him, lowing gently, through the gate, along the lane, and up to Mrs. Temse's, where they were relieved of their burden, Jorum the while looking on with critical eye, as if measuring the quantity each cow gave. Then, the order being given and the yard gate opened, Jorum would trot away slowly, looking back from time to time to see that his charges followed, and stirring up a loiterer now and then if she stopped to take a nibble at the green herbage by the lane side. But there was no bullying, barking, and heel-gnawing, for a quiet understanding seemed to exist—the cows knew Jorum, and Jorum knew the cows, often leaping up to rub his old piebald face against their great damp noses, while the grey, soft-eyed old creatures would exhale their odorous breaths with a whiff, and seem to enjoy the attentions. Only let a strange dog interfere, it were well for that dog had he never been pupped, for Jorum would set up the grey hair round his powerful neck, and shake the intruder without mercy. It was Jorum who gave little Pepper so salutary a lesson when he rushed through the flock of sheep.

We had met frequently—Jorum and I—before I could boast of the honour of his acquaintance; when one day he introduced himself to me, and I had a sample of the traits I have endeavoured to describe above. I was walking slowly homewards after a constitutional, when I was somewhat surprised to see the great rough fellow come trotting up to me, bowing and smiling, and capering about me in the most peculiar manner. As a matter of course I was somewhat taken by surprise, for the animal's instinct must have taught him how uncompromising a subject I was where dogs were concerned. However, there was such a display of good fellowship in Jorum—of whom I had heard a good report—that I certainly did condescend to say—

"Poor fellow, then!"

I'm sure I don't know why, except that I believed it to be the correct thing, and what I ought to do. At all events, it answered its purpose, for the dog seemed well satisfied, dashing off a short distance, and then charging down to within a few yards, to crouch till I nearly reached him, when he would dash off again, making huge bounds after the fashion of his greyhound

ancestors; and I could not help recalling rumours I had heard respecting Jorum doing a bit of coursing occasionally for his own especial sport and pleasure. For my part, I still went on at my customary pace, at a loss to comprehend why the dog had come to meet me, and was performing all these antics during my progress. The secret, though, was soon made plain; for having bounded up to me again and again, gazing up in my face with his earnest, intelligent eyes, he suddenly stopped short by Butcher Flaire's gate, looking hard at the thumb-latch and then at me; while when I turned out of the path, smiling at the dog's sense, his tail wagged furiously and he burst out into a long bark of thanks, which only ended when I opened the back gate, and let him bound through.

I had often read of similar displays of instinct upon the part of dogs, but this was the first I had seen; and I soon found that it was common for Jorum to get gates opened in that way.

As to his name, it must not be supposed that it was in any way connected with that of a biblical king. Jorum's name was, I believe, on account of his appetite. Whole Jorum was the correct term; but this was soon shortened into Jorum, by which appellation he was known to every man, woman, or child in Bubbley Parva.

He would do a good turn for anybody, would Jorum, so long as it was within bounds; the only exception he made being in favour of the butcher and the visits to market. But he kept steadily to this task, in spite of adverse circumstances. In fact, Jorum did not get on very well at the market town, where Mr. Flaire was in the habit of visiting a certain inn, kept by a particularly particular widow—a decidedly uncomfortable woman, whose idea of the perfection of human bliss lay in a clean floor and a brightly black-leaded grate. Now, considering that the butcher was his master for the time being, it was only reasonable that Jorum should follow him into the inn parlour, and stretch himself out to dry in front of the fire if he happened to be wet—which was often the case—while more often than not his feet were dirty; and, in spite of his instinct, Jorum had no idea of giving his paws a rub on the mat. The consequence was that the landlady vowed vengeance against the dog, and more than once tried to shut him out. But Jorum

generally contrived to elude her vigilant eye; and now he would slip in behind the butcher, now before him; and finding that he was not allowed to make the bright fender rusty, nor to make wet impressions of his body upon the white stones, he would make the best of things, and creep under the butcher's chair, where he was at all events safe from molestation. There he would sit and watch the landlady, setting at defiance her endeavours to dislodge him. In fact, he did not mean to be dislodged. He could not help being dirty. Who could that had been tramping through the mire and rain, while the butcher drove, and did not so much as soil his top boots? He was a vagabond certainly, and from choice too, for he could have had more than one comfortable home; but none the less he could appreciate a warm fireside.

"He shan't muck and mess my place no more," the landlady said at last; and, laying her plans, she trapped Jorum into a back room by treacherously offering him a beef bone. He might have known better—he might have felt sure that it was only a trick; but he had a soul above petty suspicion; and, in the frankness of his heart, he followed the base woman into the back room, where he was attacked by the potboy and a base lad with broomsticks, and compelled to make a sharp fight to get off. But, poor fellow, he was severely drubbed, though not without showing fight most valiantly, and leaving his marks upon his cowardly assailants. It would have gone hard with him, no doubt, if he had not watched his opportunity, and, leaping upon a table, shot right through the window—shivering the pane of glass, of course, to atoms.

"He won't come here no more, though," said the landlady.

And of course he did not enter that inhospitable porch again, but used to take his place opposite the inn, and sit and watch from a stone in a corner until his master once more came out. Hour after hour he would sit there waiting, with the greatest of patience; holding the while, no doubt, a lofty contempt for the treacherous woman who had driven him from her door. One thing, however, was very certain, Jorum bore no malice, but bore the ills of life with the greatest of equanimity.

One way and another, Jorum picked up a very good living, what with milk from Mrs. Temse and the odds and ends from Flaire's.

Children, too, would often give him scraps of bread and butter or treacle, for the sake of seeing him snap them so readily, catching them in those spring-trap jaws of his with the greatest ease. But there was undoubtedly another source from which Jorum drew supplies for his commissariat department—namely, the woods and fields; for there was no mistake about it, Jorum was a most notorious poacher, and, knowing his sins, he would never by any chance face a keeper with a gun. Sir Hector Hook's man had more than once vowed vengeance against him on account of the rabbits in Bosky Wood, while Lord Quarandjellee's men had a shrewd suspicion that Jorum was to blame for the scarcity of hares on coursing days.

They were right enough, for it fell to my lot to catch him in the fact, both with regard to hares and also rabbits. I found him coolly devouring a rabbit one day while fungus-hunting in the wood, my attention being attracted by the sharp, cracking sound of breaking bones; and there he was, upon a mossy couch, making a delicate meal off a young rabbit.

I very naturally exclaimed, "Hallo! you sir;" but he only gave me a look, as much as to say, "It's all right—I saw you coming. We're friends, and I don't mind you." There he lay, crunching away, and apparently thoroughly enjoying the marrowy bones he was picking. First he looked at me with one eye, then with the other, as the necessities of the case demanded; but as to appearing ashamed or attempting to fly, that was quite out of the question. However, I was not Sir Hector Hook's keeper, and it was no concern of mine if friend Jorum liked to run the risk of having his skin peppered with shot for the sake of a bit of sport on his own account and a dainty meal. So I went on with my fungus-hunting, collecting agaric and boletus, and forgetting my adventure in another five minutes.

The second time I ran against Jorum when poaching happened as I was botanizing, in a pleasant lane, in autumn. The trees were gleaming with the richest hues, while from overhead was showered down a rain of golden leaves; in the banks peeped here and there the blue petals of the dog-violet, and the pale, star-like primrose, unseasonable blossoms tempted into bloom by the mildness of the season. Now picking a leaf here and a strand there, I was jogging pleasantly along, mentally com-

paring brick-and-mortar London with the joyous, exhilarating air of the country, when there came a rush, and a hare darted through the hedge, leaped the opposite bank, and, plunging through the damp herbage of the second hedge, disappeared. I had but a flying glance of the soft brown fur, great eyes, and black-tipped ears, laid flat upon pussy's neck, and was stooping once more to cull some floral treasure, when the heavy beat of some animal fell upon my ear; and, directly after, there was a loud rustle, and, with nose down close to the earth, friend Jorum came hurrying through the hedge, just in the same track as had been taken by the hare. He glanced at me as he passed, and seemed to give me a friendly nod; and then, snuffing the track, nose down close to the earth, he followed the trail up the opposite hedge, dashed through the herbage, and he was gone.

"You'll get into difficulties some day, my friend," I thought; and then began to moralize upon the fate of the hare, which must certainly be to be devoured by the dog, who possessed the hound's scent, with the sharp sight and something of the speed of his long-legged ancestors.

No licence, no permit, it seemed ticklish work; and I felt somewhat grieved to see that Jorum had fallen into such vicious habits. Here was the explanation of his love of a vagabond life and dislike to kennel and chain. It was undoubtedly the true love of nature and sport, combined with a fine appetite, which made Jorum hunt; but for all that I could not help predestinating an untimely end for the intruder upon preserved lands. I knew that it must come to a sharp report following a quick aim, and mentally I saw poor Jorum rolled over and gasping upon the green turf he loved to roam across. What would Mrs. Temse do? Who would help Flaire to fetch his once a week fattened ox? Who then would become the children's playmate, and catch scraps of bread in their flight through the air, or suffer them balanced upon his nose till the donor said "snap," when they were thrown up and caught? The drovers would look for him in vain; other dogs would come begging round Flaire's door; and some dirty scrub of a boy would drive instead of leading the cows to and from the cow-house. Why, no one could get pigs over the ground like Jorum. You never saw the awkward, obstinate, pig-headed brutes running in all

sorts of contrary directions when he had the management; for he somehow contrived to shoulder them along, always getting a leading pig in front, with whom he seemed to have a private understanding.

But my thoughts were premature: keepers still have their suspicions, and Jorum has his occasional hare or rabbit, does his work, and vagabondizes more than ever, while I feel certain that a sleep in which I lately saw him stretched was not natural, but in a great measure due to the puddle of ale he had lapped up after having helped with a drove of sheep. It is a pity that a dog of such excellent understanding should be guilty of wrongdoing; but, after all, one could never help having a certain amount of respect for the wandering dog, due, no doubt, to the openness and gentleness of his character.

By the way, I had composed an epitaph, somewhat prematurely, of course, to be placed over the grave of Jorum. It was a capital affair, and read with amazing fluency; in fact, I was rather surprised myself to find how easy the lines came. It seemed to me that I had heard them before; but I read them over to a lady friend, who immediately exclaimed—

"Exceedingly nice. I always did admire those lines of Byron's!"

Of course, after that I compared them with the epitaph on the celebrated Boatswain, and then burnt the epitaph on Jorum. Long may he live without requiring such a post-mortem honour!

THE GHOST IN THE SNOW.

CHAPTER IV.

THE HALF-BREED INDIAN VILLAGE.

EACH one of us had some story to tell of what he had heard, on professedly good authority, in the course of his travels—for we had all travelled, more or less, in different countries, though none of us could say that we had ourselves seen anything that was not capable of explanation, with the exception of the strange illumination which the young officer had witnessed that evening, which we in vain puzzled our brains to account for satisfactorily; though, with the exception of the lieutenant himself, we each advanced several unsatisfactory theories in our endeavours to explain it. Lieutenant Hoptown, however, persisted in

declaring that he had actually and literally beheld what he had described to us.

At length, one after another, though almost at the same moment, we dropped off into a state of unconsciousness; and I must have slept soundly for two hours or more, when I was awakened by what I fancied to have been a loud scream of terror, in a female voice. I was shivering with cold, for the buffalo robe I had thrown over me had become displaced, and the fire was burning low. I looked around upon my two companions, who appeared to be sleeping soundly, well wrapped up in their furs. We had provided ourselves with a large store of firewood, consisting chiefly of the broken stairs and shelves, intermixed with pine branches, which we had piled up near the hearth; with the understanding that any one who woke, and saw that the fire needed replenishing, was to heap on more fuel without disturbing the others. This I did, until the blaze flamed up brightly, and bending over it, I warmed myself thoroughly; and then, drawing the buffalo robe over me, tried again to compose myself to sleep. I could not, however, fall asleep immediately, and I lay listening to the howling of the wind, and the snapping of branches and limbs of trees, and all the various strange, unaccountable sounds that came from the forest. It was these sounds, I believed, which I, half awakened by the cold, had fancied to be a scream of terror; and chancing to look towards the shutters, I perceived a light streaming through the chinks, which I at first mistook for daylight. Wondering that the night had sped so swiftly, I consulted my watch, and found that it was only half an hour past midnight; and a second glance at the shutters convinced me that the light I saw streaming through the chinks was that of the moon, and that the sky had cleared, as it had bade fair to do before we slept. I lay half dozing off, and waking up again, for some time. The moonbeams glanced across the wide room, and lit up the dark corners of the broken staircase, and while watching this stream of light I again fell asleep; but I had scarcely lost consciousness, when I heard the scream repeated in a tone that seemed to curdle my blood with horror. It was followed by a sound of mocking laughter still more horrible to hear; and, starting up in terror, I saw distinctly a tall, slender female form, clothed apparently in a long, white, almost transparent

garment, glide along at the head of the staircase, just where the moonbeams shone most brightly, and suddenly disappear.

I suppose that I gave utterance to some exclamation of terror or surprise, for Markham suddenly sprang up into a sitting posture, his face pale with affright.

"You heard the scream, then?" he cried. "'Tis the second time to-night! But did you see that ghostly figure glide by?"

I knew Markham to be as brave a fellow as ever lived, and I was astonished at the terror he manifested.

"I thought you were sound asleep," I replied—glad, however, to find one of my companions awake.

"No," replied Markham. "Twice have I heard that fearful cry. The first time I thought I had dreamed. I heard you rise and replenish the fire; but, to tell the truth, as you did not speak, I felt ashamed to mention what I fancied to be a horrid dream, caused by our conversation this evening before we slept. But I have not slept since, though I kept silent until I heard your exclamation. I heard the screams, and I fancied that I saw a female form in white flit by, at the head of the staircase. And that horrible laugh! It was not human. It sounded like the mockery of fiends!"

"Look at the ponies," I interrupted. "Could the noise have come from them?"

We had brought Hoptown's pony into the room, and placed the animal in a corner, beside our own. They had both been lying down, perfectly quiet, but now they had risen, and were visibly trembling in every limb; and, on approaching them, we found them covered with perspiration. They appeared to be somewhat relieved from their manifest terror by our approach, and whinnied, and rubbed their heads against our shoulders, as if appealing to us for protection.

"By Jove! this is too much of a good thing!" exclaimed Markham. "I wonder," he added, "whether Hoptown is asleep?"

I called the lieutenant by name, and Markham did so likewise. But he did not stir until I gently pulled aside the buffalo robe which covered him. Then he sprang up into a sitting posture, and rubbed his eyes, and yawned, as if he were suddenly awakened from sleep. But his pale face, and the furtive, half-frightened glance he cast at the head of the staircase—towards

which his face had been turned as he lay—convinced me that he had both heard and seen what he perhaps felt ashamed to acknowledge.

In the woods, at the dead of night, strange sounds, proceeding from night birds and wild animals prowling about in search of their prey, and from the snapping and falling of rotten twigs and branches, are heard in the calmest weather. Now, however, these ordinary night sounds were silenced or overpowered by the howling of the wind and the wild tumult of the storm, and within the house all was perfectly still. We listened for some moments without exchanging a word. Then I asked Hoptown, who had also risen to his feet, whether he had been disturbed.

"To confess the truth, yes," he replied. "In fact, I have scarcely slept. I lay awake for some time after you fellows had fallen asleep, thinking of the strange beacon lights which guided me to this shelter, and was just dozing off when I fancied I heard footsteps overhead. However, I supposed the sound to come from some rats, or bats, or some other vermin that infest such ruins as this, and was again dozing off when I was startled by a cry that sounded to my ears like the shriek of a mortally wounded horse. I have heard such shrieks, many a time, in the Crimea. Presently the cry was repeated, but with a more human sound. I heard you rise, and put wood on the fire; but as you did not speak, I was ashamed to mention what I had heard—especially after the affair of the lights—lest you should think me a cowardly, superstitious fool. So I tried to sleep again, and was, as I believe, dropping off, when I heard the cry repeated, and saw what appeared to me to be a transparent female figure, glide past at the head of the stairs—"

"And that sound, as of mocking laughter?" said I.

"Yes. But are you sure," continued the lieutenant, "that that wasn't caused by the horses?"

"Yes," said Markham. "It seemed to come from the room above."

"And the ponies were trembling, and perspiring with terror," I put in.

"What we have all heard and seen alike cannot be mere fancy," said Hoptown. "Perhaps you'll believe that I really beheld the lights in the upper floor now?"

"We never doubted your word, my dear

fellow," replied Markham; "though we thought it must have been some illusion."

"And all the rest is illusion, I suppose?" continued the lieutenant. "I only know," he added, "that I would sooner face a loaded battery than be subject to such illusions. I like to know what I have really got to contend against."

"All is quiet now, at all events," said Markham. "It is strange—most unaccountable," he went on, after a pause; "but it may be possible that we have all been dreaming. Dreams are sometimes so vivid as to appear like reality; and, you know, we were talking of such superstitions before we fell asleep."

"And all dreamt the same thing; and I was dreaming, I suppose, when the lights guided me to this place?" said the lieutenant, ironically.

"And the ponies, too," said I.

"I don't know what to make of it," replied Markham.

"Except that it's deuced unpleasant, to say the least of it," added Hoptown.

We had again seated ourselves on our buffalo robes around the fire, and I was forming a pillow for my head, when Hoptown suddenly cried—

"Listen! Are we dreaming now?"

"I hear nothing but the wind," said I.

"It's the wind shaking the shutters," added Markham.

"Is it?" continued Hoptown. "The shutters are overhead, then. Hark! It's as regular as clockwork. Is *that* the wind?"

We all listened attentively. The sound was faint—scarcely audible at first, amidst the howling of the wind, which seemed to have increased since the sky had cleared, and the snowfall had ceased. It gradually became louder and more distinct, however, appearing to come from the back room on the upper floor, in which was the long, narrow chest I have described. The sound was like that made by a coffin-maker hammering nails into the lid of a coffin. There came three or four quick, sharp, clinking taps—tap, tap, tap. Then a brief interval of silence. Then tap, tap, tap—tap, tap, tap, tap—tap, tap, tap—and so on, regularly and without intermission. It was horrible to listen to. I felt as though the blood were curdling in my veins; and for some minutes we listened silently, looking at one another, but seemingly unable to speak.

Hoptown was the first to break the spell—

"By heaven!" he exclaimed, "this is too horrible! If it comes from living being, I'll find out who he is, at all hazards."

He sprang to his feet as he spoke, and seizing his gun, moved towards the staircase.

"Stay," cried Markham, "let us all go together. There may be people concealed in the house, though we have searched it thoroughly, who have got up this plot in order to frighten us, and drive us away."

Markham and I had brought our guns in the sleigh with us, to be prepared for a chance shot, though we had had no occasion to use them.

In case the powder might be damped by the snow, we all three withdrew the charges, loaded afresh, and fitted on new caps; and, thus armed, proceeded to mount the broken, rickety staircase, one immediately after the other.

Not that our guns could have been of any real service to us; for a party of determined men, resolved not to be taken by surprise, might have hurled us, one after another, from the head of the stairs to the bottom without meeting with any resistance on our part; for we needed to hold on with both hands to raise ourselves, in places where the stairs had altogether fallen away. But we instinctively felt safer thus armed.

However, we met with no interruption. The raps continued as we slowly mounted the stairs—one of which gave way beneath the weight of Markham, who was the hindmost, and fell clattering to the floor beneath. There was a momentary cessation of the sound, as if the operator had stopped to listen to the noise made by the falling stair. Then it went on again, regularly as before.

We gained the upper floor, and stood still a few moments to listen to any movement that might be made. Still the rapping went on, and continued until, lightly and slowly, in our stocking feet, we had nearly crossed the front room, when it ceased so suddenly as to startle us. We again stopped, and listened in silence; but no movement was audible, and together we stepped briskly into the back room.

It was empty and silent, exactly as we had left it after our former survey of the interior of the house. The long, narrow chest—which, to our fancy, looked more like a coffin than ever—was in the same position as before.

We advanced towards it, and raised the lid; looked out of the window into the now clear but windy night, and watched the clouds driven rapidly across the sky, and the deep shadows cast upon the snow by the trees, beneath the bright moonlight, temporarily disappearing as the moon was momentarily obscured by some passing cloud, and then again stretching in fantastic shapes across the broad, glittering expanse of snow. The black stumps of the felled trees heretofore alluded to—now distinctly visible in the moonlight, and disappearing in the quickly passing darkness, to reappear the next instant—looked like fantastic living figures moving to and fro; and so wild and weird and drear appeared the landscape, that for the moment, while gazing admiringly upon it, we forgot our present purpose. However, it was soon recalled to our minds, and we shouted aloud, and called for any one present to answer.

No reply came but the wild howling of the wind, and the rushing noise it made as it swept over the bending forest trees; and we ascended to the second storey, only to find everything as we had left it a few hours before. We thought it useless to proceed to the loft, so we returned to the room below, thoroughly chilled with cold, and no better satisfied than we were before we set forth.

Once more replenishing the fire, we resumed our places before it, though with little thought of sleep.

"It is marvellously strange," said Markham; "but, at all events, our survey seems to have put a stop to that horrid tapping, which was enough to drive one crazy."

"The ponies seem all right now," said Hoptown. The animals were lying down quietly in their corner. "How strange it is that they should have been so terrified."

"Well," continued Markham, striving after a grim joke, "since we have managed to lay the ghost, I suggest that we comfort ourselves with another pannikin of hot grog. I feel chilled to the very marrow."

"Agreed," exclaimed Hoptown and I, together.

And the coffee warmer, which had already done us so much good service, was again called into requisition.

Scarcely, however, had Markham lighted the spirit lamp beneath the warmer, ere—rap, rap, rap—tap, tap, tap, came from the back room above: low at first, and growing

louder and more distinct as it proceeded—exactly as we had heard it before.

We stared at one another in a species of ludicrous dismay.

"Well, upon my soul, this is too bad!" exclaimed Hoptown. "What is to be done?"

"Nothing that I can conceive," replied Markham. "It's horrible to hear, and that's a fact. But we must just grin and bear it. We can't help ourselves."

"It would be useless to search the rooms again," said I.

"I suspect so. At all events, I shall not stir," replied Markham.

"I have heard of insects making some such noise in decayed wood," I observed. "There is plenty of rotten wood in this old house. Can that explain the mystery?"

"No," replied Markham; "I have heard the ticking noise to which you allude, hundreds of times. Superstitious people at home call it the death watch; but it's no more like this noise than a penny whistle is like a trumpet in sound. Hark! you may hear the clink of the hammer, as upon some metallic substance, as plainly as possible. No insect ever made such a noise as that. Besides, can you account for it ceasing when the stair fell; and stopping altogether when we drew near the room, though we trod noiselessly? And, then, the other sounds we have heard, and the things we have seen! The lights, and the female forms!"

"How can you account for them?" said I.

"Ah!" replied Markham. "That's the question. I can't account for them. So let us drink our grog while it is hot."

We shouted aloud, however; but to no purpose, so far as the rapping was concerned. So, crouching before the fire, we lit our pipes and sipped the hot brandy and water, and made the best of our unpleasant position.

After continuing with unbroken regularity for another hour at least, the noise suddenly ceased. I looked at my watch. It was just ten minutes past two o'clock. The wind now began to lull. The loud gusts, which had seemed to shake the crazy old house to its foundation, were no longer heard; and the silence that ensued, within and without, after the previous disturbances, was startling in its effect. I had not expected to sleep again that night, but there were nearly six hours yet before daylight; and gradually, as I sat watching the fire, I felt my eyelids grow heavy, forgetfulness intervened, and I

slept, and slept soundly, as did my companions also, until daybreak.

We awoke shivering with cold, for the fire had gone out while we slept. The wind had entirely ceased, and the rays of the cold, wintry sun shone brightly through the chinks in the shutters.

We threw the shutters open, and looked abroad. The sky was almost without a cloud; but the cold was intense, for though the sun shone brightly it seemed to give no heat, and the snow lay unthawed beneath its brightest rays. Save for the snowdrifts, and the twigs and branches of trees that lay scattered profusely around, there were no signs of the furious storm of the previous day.

The room seemed more dismal in the daylight than it had looked by torch and firelight on the previous evening, and our first care was to relight the fire and warm ourselves thoroughly; our second, to provide breakfast, for which we had enough provisions yet remaining. As we sat at our meal, we talked over the events of the past evening and night; but though we spoke lightly of what we had seen and heard, it remained utterly inexplicable to us, unless we had been willing—which we were not—to explain it by charging it to some supernatural agency. Before we re-entered our sleighs, we took another survey of the rooms immediately above, but discovered nothing that could account for the strange sights and sounds that had been manifested to us.

It was evident enough that a very great many years had elapsed since the house had been tenanted, and that it had been one of the stations of the great Fur Company was shown by the rotten remnants of fur skins that strewed the upper loft. Also, that it had once had female inhabitants was apparent from the remnants of once valuable and costly female garments that had become rotten with age; and it certainly seemed strange and unaccountable that these articles of female apparel, so much coveted by the Indians and half-breeds, should have been thus left to rot with damp and age, unless there were some urgent reasons which forbade these people to appropriate to themselves articles which appeared to have been left without an owner, and which they are generally so eager to carry off.

We judged ourselves to be some twelve or fifteen miles from the camp; but we had strayed, in the storm and darkness, far out

of our path, and it was necessary, in the first place, to get into the proper route. Our companion, the young lieutenant, expressed his intention to go forward in search of his friends at the Cedar Lake; but as he was less familiar with the country than Markham, it was settled that he should keep by us until we found the regular road.

For some two or three miles we skirted the forest without finding the opening we sought, until we suddenly heard the loud barking of dogs, and, proceeding a short distance farther, saw the smoke from numerous huts, or cottages, rising in spiral columns above the trees until it mingled with the clear, early-morning atmosphere.

"The half-breed village, by Jove!" exclaimed Markham, "that at one time yesterday I would gladly have given a hundred dollars to have discovered."

Before long we heard the hum of human voices, and in a few moments came in sight of several groups of cabins, arranged without any apparent order or regularity on the outskirts of the forest.

"These people will be able to put us in the right road," said Markham, "and we'll stop here to second breakfast if they have anything to give us to eat; for we had but short commons this morning, and I, for my part, feel as hungry as a hunter already."

We were all in much the same condition, and driving up to one of the largest and best cabins, we inquired whether they could give us breakfast. An old lady, who professed to be a pure French Canadienne, replied in the French patois used by the habitants and half-breeds alike, and politely begging us to alight, she quickly set before us some newly baked damper (cakes of wheaten flour made without yeast, and baked in the wood ashes) and fresh butter, and set to work to fry some fish fresh from the lake. We asked her to make us some tea, and gave her for herself all the tea, half a pound or more, that we had left.

The old lady was very chatty. She seemed curious to learn what had brought us to the village, spoke of the furious snow-storm of the previous day, and observed that it was seldom strangers came to the place.

Markham told her that we had been caught in the storm of the day before, and must have perished had we not come across a large deserted house in the forest, two or

three miles distant, in which we had spent the night.

Up to this moment the old dame had been chatting in a lively manner, as also had a number of Canadians, half-breeds, and Indians, who had come to look at the strangers, and who stood watching us as we ate our breakfast; but as soon as Markham mentioned the deserted house, she crossed herself devoutly, as did several of the lookers-on, and muttered some prayers or charms, while she gazed upon us as though she were doubtful whether we were what we appeared to be, and whether our visit did not forbode evil to her house, and to the village.

As Markham, however, proceeded to state that we had passed but a bad night in the deserted house, and would be glad to get safe back to our camp again, she seemed to become somewhat reassured; and, after addressing her neighbours in a patois so mixed up with Indian words that it was almost utterly unintelligible to us, and receiving answers in a similar dialect, she again addressed us in Canadian French, and asked whether messieurs had not seen something terrible.

We replied that we had heard strange noises that were inexplicable to us, and that one of the party had seen the upper windows apparently brilliantly illumined.

Again she crossed herself devoutly, and exclaimed—

"Ah, c'est horrible! C'est affreux! Thank God and the Holy Virgin, messieurs, that you got away in safety."

Markham requested her to tell what there was so terrible about the deserted house, and why it had such a bad name with the people of the village; and perceiving that she hesitated, he slipped half a dollar into her hand.

LAYS OF THE SHORT ONE.

THE COPPER AND THE WICKED WORD.

I SPUN a copper up in the air;
I held my hand—it was not there;
And though we searched all the pavement near,
We found it not, and we had no beer.

I said a wicked word, p'r'aps an oath;
I know 'twas naughty, so call it both;
For well I know no term's too strong
To dub those adjectives known as wrong.

Next day that copper, or bronze alloy,
Was roked from the mud by a shoeblack boy;
For the cuss that I didn't ought have said,
I at Bow-street court five shillings paid.

TABLE TALK.

HOW is it that the wearing of uniforms is with many persons considered infradig? There is a station-master down one line who detests appearing in the Company's clothes, and only dons them when some of the big-wigs are likely to pay his station a visit. Academic costumes are likewise looked upon by many with disfavour, and the Oxonians strip off their gowns at every opportunity. The proctors—whose business, amongst other duties, is to see that these garments are worn—have, it is reported, had recourse to a trick which, according to a contemporary, was on one occasion met in the most appropriate manner. The proctor's trick consists in the assumption, during his inquisitorial rounds, of ordinary attire, calculated to lull the suspicions of academical flâneurs, while a servant follows with a blue bag containing robes which can be donned at a moment's notice. A proctor and servant with blue bag were lately wending their way along the street, when a hapless undergraduate, who was without his proper costume, fell into the snare. "Quick! quick!" cried the dignitary, "give me my gown, Marshall. Sir," turning to his victim, "are you a member of this uni—?" The question died upon his lips, for there stood the undergraduate fully arrayed in cap and gown, while by his side stood his "scout" holding an empty carpet bag.

A CURIOUS STORY respecting a large and stout grey fish, somewhere about seven pounds in weight, is told by the Madeira correspondent of the *Daily News*:—One of the wonders of the deep brought up by the trawl on board the *Challenger*, and one most highly treasured by the savans thereon, was a remarkable specimen secured in no one knows how many fathoms of water, and brought in triumph to the upper world. Such was the enormous pressure the fish had been born to bear through the ordinary course of his existence in those unknown depths, that when drawn into the lighter and warmer water of the ocean's surface, and finally into the open air, his over-tensioned frame could stand it no longer, and he "burst up" entirely, and presented himself in woeful plight—a sight for savans and for men. He was carefully put together, and finally bottled up, to be duly museumed as one of the strangest of ichthy-

ological curiosities. When the *Challenger* arrived at Madeira, so the story runs, the savans came ashore; and, naturally enough, some of their earliest steps were directed towards the fish market, where they no doubt expected to find very common specimens of the ordinary fish of those latitudes. Let the reader picture for himself the expression of the savans on seeing before their eyes, duly ranged on slabs for sale at the rate of twopence per pound, the counterpart of the very fish whose unworthy and mangled remains they had so carefully preserved and stowed away! He had no doubt knocked himself to pieces in the trawl on his way up. When caught by the hook and line, his astonishment and horror were expressed by his eyes starting almost out of his head, an expression which we may hope the savans did but mildly imitate on recognising the complete form of their valued friend of the deep sea fishery.

"SCHOOL" five hundred nights. "What, and no holidays?" exclaimed a little one. "Oh, how tired they must be!" Possibly Mr. and Mrs. Bancroft and their charming company may think the time long; but with such appreciative audiences, they can never be tired.

WE ARE PROMISED a new illustrated paper at the beginning of March, to be called the *Pictorial World*. Advertisements are already beginning to flood the walls; and handbills appear with a capital prospectus, ending with a list of the best sketch writers of the day. The price is to be that of the *Illustrated Times*, once so popular, with its pleasant articles—the Literary Lounger, the Lounger at the Clubs, &c. There should be a good opening for such a paper.

Contributions should be legibly written, and only on one side of each leaf.

Communications to the Editor should be addressed to the Office, 19, Tavistock-street, Covent-garden, W.C.

All Contributions are attentively considered, and unaccepted MSS. are returned on receipt of stamps for postage; but the Editor cannot hold himself responsible for any accidental loss. No unaccepted MSS. will be returned until a written application has been made for them.

Terms of Subscription for ONCE A WEEK, free by post:—Weekly Numbers for Six Months, 5s. 5d.; Monthly Parts, 5s. 8d.

ONCE A WEEK

NEW SERIES.

No. 323.

March 7, 1874.

Price 2d.

JACK'S SISTER; OR, WOMANLY PAST QUESTION.

CHAPTER XVI.
TREVOIL BLOOD.



OLLINGWOOD Rectory stands in the outskirts of the village of that name, about a mile and a half from the fashionable watering place of St. Leonard's-on-Sea — a rather pretty, irregularly built house very much out of repair,

and boasting a conservatory, wherein the only flower that grows is a billiard table, and the glass of which is starred and broken by frequent contact with cues and elbows; a garden woefully neglected and almost entirely sacrificed to the exigencies of croquet; an orchard where the rector's cow, goat, and gig horse browse, and where most of the trees have been destroyed by the rector's pupils; a breakfast-room where the family dine; a dining-room used as a study; a study where the rector sleeps; a drawing-room opening with French windows into a verandah, and crammed full of furniture, some old, some new, some tawdry and fine, some plain and solid, no one thing matching the other, and all in a normal state of picturesque untidiness; six or seven bed-rooms, and the other offices of a gentleman's family.

Like house, like owners!

Hollingwood Rectory might be taken any day as an excellent portrait of the Rev. Mr. Delamayne, his wife and family.

Thirty years ago few young men entered on life with better prospects of success therein than Paul Delamayne. A younger son of a good family—with little money it is true, but plenty of talent and good interest—he had early taken an excellent degree at Merton College, Oxford, had obtained a fellowship shortly afterwards, and had the promise of a snug living in the course of the next few years, when he committed the mistake which wrecked his entire future, and upset his prospects for good and all. He married a penniless girl. When I add that that girl was one of the Trevoils of Greetwood, nothing more need be said in proof of Mr. Delamayne's stupendous folly.

Everybody knows the Trevoils, by hearsay, at any rate; and few of the at all rigid among the upper ten thousand care to know them in any other way. Fathers look black when they see their daughters waltzing with one of the Trevoil young men; and mothers beguile their sons into quiet corners, and there implore them, with tears, to avoid the fascinations of the Trevoil young women. The Trevoil family, male and female, are as black sheep—nay, even as wild goats—within the aristocratic park palings, and as such are carefully shunned by their white and woolly brethren. Justly? Why, of course, justly. When was there ever smoke without flame? and when was there ever found a man of the Trevoil race who did not achieve a reputation as a blackleg and roué before he had passed his twenty-fifth year? or a woman of the same family whose chief aim in life did not appear to be the compromising herself as deeply as possible without open disgrace, and the making miserable as many unfortunates of the other sex as lay in her power?

God has given the Trevoils exceptionally

handsome faces and keen intellects. The Trevoils have used them in the devil's service. Hence their bad odour in general society.

Vox populi, vox Dei.

It was sufficiently bad, then, that Paul Delamayne should have married one of these sirens, the third daughter of George Lord Trevoil of unenviable notoriety, as ringleader in that terribly bad Newmarket scandal, with the young Marquis of Bledderdale; and more especially as one of the principals in that worse case of Maudesley v. Maudesley and Trevoil, which was brought to so sudden an end by the suicide of the unhappy husband whilst half maddened by the disclosures his jealousy had evoked. This, as I have said, was bad enough; but Paul had made it worse by having fallen into the toils in direct opposition to the counsels of his guardian and patron; and afterwards, knowing the anger which must supervene, of attempting to conceal his marriage.

Of course, the attempt failed, as such things always do. Next to the folly of falling in love with the wrong person is the folly of attempting to hide it from those who care for you. Paul's patron resented the insult to his penetration quite as much as that to his advice. He withdrew all connection with the young man, and bestowed the living on some one else. Bear in mind that young Delamayne's marriage had already cost him his fellowship; and you will see that Miss Trevoil's marriage was not likely to turn out a good one for either of the couple.

Fortunately there were friends who would not desert the young man because he had taken one false step in life. These friends invited him and his wife on long visits to their houses; and exerted themselves to obtain him a college tutorship as soon as he was ordained. It was not much of a provision; but the Hon. Mrs. Delamayne preferred it to the other alternatives offered by these kindly Samaritans—a curacy in a remote country district among the fens of Lincolnshire, or an assistant chaplaincy in the Falkland Islands; and as to waiting, as she suggested, till something better turned up—why, the wives of Paul's hospitable acquaintances somehow found their young and charming guest not quite so pleasant a visitor as did their husbands and brothers. They did not wish to be unkind; but even

as they had welcomed so did they speed the parting bride, and with such heartiness that, in default of accepting one of the proffered situations, the Delamaynes would have been forced to go into lodgings at the end of their first year of married life, and—starve there.

They went to Oxford instead, and got along somehow. The Hon. Mrs. Delamayne was fast and extravagant; but nothing worse, which is saying much for a Trevoil. I think it was in mercy—though Paul was not of that opinion at the time—that Providence afflicted the lady with continual illness after the birth of their third child, before the fifth summer of their marriage. They had eight children altogether—people always do have an immense family if they have nothing to keep it on—and yet they managed to weather the winds somehow. Mrs. Delamayne was left a small legacy, and Delamayne got a mastership in time. It was not much; but with other stray aids it enabled them to keep both ends pretty firmly together, despite the increasing family.

And the great trial that family was to both parents!

The bad blood of the Trevoils ran through them all, rotting every plant from the root upwards.

Paul Delamayne, the eldest son, got a commission in the Blues, made love to one of the sergeant's daughters, was thrashed by the father, and, although the affair was hushed up for the latter's sake, had to exchange into a line regiment, went to India, and died of softening of the brain in three months.

Trevoil, the third child, was expelled from Harrow for outrageous misconduct, and sent to a common grammar school, from which he ran away; got to Australia, "loafed" about among herdsmen and bushrangers, kept a gin store, married a shepherd's daughter, and still wrote to his mother every now and then—when he wanted money. He was her favourite, and he got it whenever there was any to get; but I have often heard her wish he were safe in Heaven. Probably the wish was too extravagant. At any rate, it has not yet been granted.

George was an idiot, and died early. No one regretted him.

Alberta had something the matter with her spine, and also died. The doctor who attended her made some very severe re-

marks to Mrs. Delamayne on the score of neglect, and Paul and his wife were very cool to one another for some time. The girl had taken more after him than any of the family.

But it was Leonora, the eldest of all, who proved the sharpest thorn in her parents' side, and was the cause of their leaving Oxford, by choosing to elope with one of her father's pupils, an undergraduate in Mr. Delamayne's college—the Hon. Frederick Transalpine. Some among you may still remember the immense fuss made by that foolish young man's family on the occasion, and all the law business and social gossip which it entailed. The Earl of Ultramontane came down to Oxford himself, and flatly accused Mr. and Mrs. Delamayne of collusion with the runaways; an utterly false allegation, by the way, as regards the father, than whom a more unobservant, easy-going man never existed; indeed, as to having any act or part in the management of his family and household, all who knew Paul would have laughed the idea to scorn. A moral and an intellectual man, steady, clever, even severe, in his collegiate duties; lazy, rather sheepish, hating disagreeables at home, and utterly indifferent to evils which did not lie in his immediate power to remedy. His wife and family stood foremost in this latter class, and he therefore contented himself with regarding them as necessary misfortunes—to be ignored when possible, deplored when necessary, but in nowise dependent on himself. The Earl of Ultramontane soon found that he had no grounds for accusing the Master of Merton. Mrs. Delamayne, however, did not come out so well from the discussion. Probably the temptation of seeing her eldest daughter restored to the aristocratic ranks had been too sweet to the Don's ailing wife to be resisted over-sterly. She, of course, threw the entire blame on young Transalpine; but if, as asserted, Miss Delamayne had passed her four and twentieth year, while her young adorer, according to all testimonies, was barely over his nineteenth, the abduction must be considered more on the lady's part than the gentleman's. Howbeit, it was done; and while the Earl of Ultramontane was still raging at Oxford, and threatening immediate legal proceedings for a dissolution of the marriage on the score of invalidity—little Transalpine being of such tender age—the happy couple had fled to

Rome, and were enjoying their nuptial bliss within the ancient walls of that city.

Brief bliss! Before anything could be done, before the Hon. Frederick's pocket money was expended, or his handsome wife's conjugal amiability frayed at the edge, the lad was *dead*—dead after two hours' illness, consequent on an over-hearty supper of fruit and wines taken when still hot from a long ride over the campagna.

Cholera had proved a surer agent than the law. The marriage was dissolved even while the earl was still talking about it; and Leonora returned, a penniless widow, to her father's house.

He took her back. Even had his wife not insisted on it, I suppose family affection would have gone so far with Delamayne, seeing that his daughter had no other home to go to, and that the Ultramontanes would do nothing for her. Frederick was a younger son, and would have entered on the possession of about £800 a year on coming of age. This sum, therefore, Leonora thought herself entitled to. But her husband's family scouted the claim with contempt, refusing even to recognize her as his widow; and after a private consultation with a lawyer, Mr. Delamayne refused to press the matter, and, greatly to his daughter's wrath, she found herself heiress to nothing more than those personal effects of her husband which he happened to have in his possession at the time of his marriage. The Ultramontanes paid the bills for their son's medical attendance and funeral, but nothing more; and—the Delamaynes left Oxford.

This was, perhaps, the only occasion since his marriage in which Paul Delamayne had acted with independence or vigour; and certainly neither quality was shown in a feeble degree. His family could say nothing—in fact, he did not allow them a word: giving them to understand, in one tremendous blaze of wrath, that in this instance he meant to be master of his own house, and that those who rebelled might depart from that shelter at once and for ever.

Maude, who had been a year out, was sent back to school in company with Katherine and little Barbara, the latter a child in the nursery. Mrs. Delamayne and her widowed daughter were packed off to cheap lodgings on the Welsh sea coast, the mastership was resigned, and the connection with Oxford entirely severed; and when the family met again, in the ensuing Christ-

mastide, it was to find that their domestic lord and head had purchased the small and poorly paid living of Hollingwood, in the county of Sussex; and was resolved to eke out his income by taking in two or three young gentlemen to be fitted for Eton, Harrow, or the universities.

This happened nearly eight years ago, and the Delamaynes were still at Hollingwood, with every prospect of remaining there for the rest of their existence. How the girls would have endured it, had it not been for the proximity of St. Leonard's, I know not. As it was, they spent much more of their time on the Marina, or in the fashionable shops of that town, than at the paternal rectory; and soon became excellently well known to the residents and visitors of that place as "the Delamayne graces," the best-dressed and best-looking girls, and the best waltzers in St. Leonard's; yet withal girls who did not get married, and who remained free, fast, and flirting, while "slower" as well as plainer damsels were entering the bonds of wedlock on all sides of them. Mrs. Delamayne rarely left her sofa now; and with her grey hair, wrinkled skin, and emaciated frame, looked quite an old woman. Leonora, still a widow—for despite her undoubted beauty, and the romantic story (as given forth by her family) of that early love match and bereavement, no one had ever attempted to step into young Transalpine's vacant shoes—was beginning at two-and-thirty to look as worn, faded, and sharpened as a woman past middle age.

The fact was that the Trevoil beauty never wore. You may tell their women in a moment by their small, peculiarly graceful figures, the willowy curves of which have been sung by many an adorer; the transparently pink and white skins, sharp little aquiline noses, straw-coloured hair, and large, pale blue eyes; and until about three or four and twenty, they are given to looking far younger than their years; and, by their delicate, eggshell-china appearance, making every other girl look like the coarsest pottery beside them. After that charmed period, however, they "go off" all of a sudden; the pink and white skin turns to sallowness; shoulder-blades, elbows, and cheek-bones grow preternaturally sharp; the straw-coloured hair thins; and in a couple of years they seem to have progressed ten. The beauty fades rapidly, and nothing but a sharp, angular, eminently aristocratic-

looking and thoroughly *passée* woman is left by the time they are thirty.

Such was poor Leonora, considered by her sisters as quite elderly, and not on the best of terms with any of them—Maude, the next girl, being perhaps the most severe on her, that young lady having just arrived at the waning period, and feeling naturally resentful against her elder sister for holding up a mirror to all possible admirers of the havoc a few more years must achieve. Her flirtations were becoming sentimental now—always the last point with a Trevoil—and only skilful men might hope to play the game unscathed. Katherine, commonly called Kitty Delamayne by men and women impartially, was still, however, in the flush of her charms; and using them with sufficient liberality to be considered the greatest flirt in all St. Leonard's and Hastings put together. Her face and figure were exquisite; her conquests ever flourishing and ever new; her latest victim, the Rev. Claude Mostyn, the new vicar of a somewhat "high" church, situated on the brow of one of the many hills which rear their heads between St. Leonard's beach and Hollingwood Rectory. Indeed, she was at present supposed to be engaged to that gentleman—the Delamayne girls did get engaged sometimes, though they never went as far as matrimony—and was in more than usually good spirits at having so legitimate a victim for torture and fascination.

As for Barbara, or Baby—for she was never known by any other title—she was as yet considered a mere infant; hardly out of the school-room, or into long dresses; a child who was allowed to say anything and do anything that she pleased, on the score of her youth and innocence; to idle with her father's pupils out of study hours, flirt with her sisters' admirers, or even try her juvenile fascinations on the curate, a middle-aged Benedict—Mr. Delamayne made these qualifications essential in advertising for an assistant—at her own sweet will and pleasure: no one out of the family having the least idea that she had reached her eighteenth birthday.

It was breakfast-time at the rectory—the family breakfast-time; for the two pupils, lads of fifteen and eighteen, breakfasted by themselves an hour earlier; but though the table presented anything but a tidy appearance, and one half-emptied tea-cup stood beside a plate, there was no one in the

room; and the urn smoked on unheeded for more than ten minutes before the door opened, and Maude—looking anything but fresh from bath or toilet, clad in a faded silk dress only fit for the evening when new, with her two front locks still imprisoned in hair pins to give them a wavy appearance for the afternoon, and the rest twisted up in a careless fashion, which showed plainly the natural pale colour of the roots against the superadded golden tint so much in vogue nowadays—dawdled into the room, muttering something about “no one being ever down but herself,” and, after a sharp glance at the table, rang the bell irritably.

An untidy-looking country girl, bursting out of her cotton gown all over like a too ripe gooseberry, and with bare red arms of a scalded appearance, answered the summons, and stood stolidly while Maude asked—

“Where is your master’s cup? and why on earth haven’t you brought up the potted lobster, when you know he always takes it?”

“He’ve had his breakfast already,” the girl answered, sulkily. “He come down half an hour ago, an’ said as no one weren’t down he’d have his in the study, which I took it in. The things was all here then.”

“Well, well,” said Maude, “he couldn’t expect us to be up at daybreak. Whose cup is that?” pointing to the one which had been used.

“Miss Baby’s that is. She come in a while ago, and poured herself out a cup, saying as how her were thirsty, and couldn’t wait for breakfast.”

“Why, where is she gone?”

“Out in t’oorchard, I think. Aren’t I to be taking up the missus’s tea, miss? It’s a quarter to ten, an’ her bell have rung.”

Maude poured it out without answering, and had sent it up, and got some way through her own meal, when Kitty entered, bundled up in a crumpled muslin dressing gown, and with her hair taken out of the hair pins and gathered into a great knot on the top of her head.

“What a figure you are!” was Maude’s greeting, as she poured out her sister’s tea.

“No worse than yourself. It’s so awfully hot, and pads tickle one’s neck so. Push the butter this way, Maude, will you? You greedy thing, you’ve eaten all the toast.”

“You ought to come down in time, then.

I can’t wait breakfast all day for you lie-a-bed people.”

“You were not sitting up at the Richardsons’ till any hour last night.”

“The Richardsons’ party was over by eleven, Kitty. If it took you and Claude Mostyn an hour and a quarter to walk half a mile, that was your fault.”

“Or his,” said Kitty, looking demure. “Where’s Baby? She was up before me.”

“Out in the orchard. I’m not going to be running after her. She knows breakfast is ready well enough.”

“I’d send Jane, though, if I were you. She was up early yesterday on pretence of gardening; and I could see her yellow head and Tom Bruce’s red one pottering up and down among the apple trees.”

“Why, you don’t suppose there is any danger with that child. He’s hardly out of jackets.”

“Children are precocious sometimes.”

“But he and Baby were eating toffee together last vacations.”

“Baby is past toffee now—not that she’s a fool. I am not afraid of her.”

“Has your affection for Claude made you tenderly sympathetic with the blighted affections of boys in general?”

“Do you call Claude a boy, Maude? Ah, well, I suppose it is natural; but though you are getting on in years, you needn’t put all your juniors into long clothes.”

“I am not doing any such thing, Kitty. Claude Mostyn is older than I am.”

“I never said he was not. Ah, there is Baby!” as footsteps were heard coming up the farther end of the verandah, then a whispered expostulation, a faint concussion of air, something like the drawing of a—scent bottle cork, and Baby Delamayne appeared at the glass door, looking the very impersonation of prettiness, in a little pink muslin frock, made short as for a child, a large gipsy hat, pulled coquettishly over her apple blossom cheeks, and all her fair hair hanging in a glittering, fluffy mass round her shoulders. Somebody else’s footsteps were heard retreating down the garden walk.

“Why didn’t you come in before, and who was that with you, Baby?” Maude asked, rather crossly.

“Only Tom. He has been helping me transplant some roots,” Baby answered, beginning to turn over the pieces of bacon left in the dish with her fork.

"Then he ought to have been getting his books ready for papa."

"Why don't you tell him so? Shall I call him in?" and Baby's eyes twinkled.

"Don't be saucy, Baby. You know you've no business to be out with the boys at breakfast-time; and as to planting roots at this time of the year—why, that's all rubbish."

"Rubbish or not, I hope they will come up," said Baby, eating her bacon coolly. "Our garden is a disgrace. Are you going into town to-day, Kitty?"

"Yes—Maude and I have some shopping to do in Robertson-street."

"I'll go with you. I want to have my photo done; and we must call for Claude's dog. I promised to take it out for a walk."

Kitty's lip curled; but her answer merely referred to the former part of the sentence.

"Your photo! Why you had half a dozen taken in the winter."

"Oh! they're all gone. I wasted two of them on *girls!*" and Baby made a little "moue" expressive of disgust.

"And what are you having more done for? I'm sure all our friends have you. Besides, Williams sells your photo—Mrs. Thompson told me so; and said she thought it highly incorrect for a clergyman's daughter."

"As if clergymen's daughters were never sold," punned Baby, laughing. "But I suppose no one wants to buy Lydia Thompson's ugly face."

"Very likely; but you haven't told us why you are having yours done."

"That's a secret."

"Not much of a one," said Maude, keenly.

"The little goose wants to bestow it on Tom Bruce. Now, don't deny it, Baby!"

"I don't want to. He's going away, poor boy, and I don't see why I shouldn't save him a shilling by giving him one if I like."

"If you are going to have any foolishness with that overgrown schoolboy, Baby," said Kitty, in good-humoured tones, "you will make papa awfully angry. He said he should only take little boys for the schools now you were growing up; and you know what his anger can be."

"I've never seen it," said Baby, shrugging her pretty shoulders. "But you need not preach. One Leonora is enough, thank you. I'm not going to run away with an over-

grown schoolboy. They are not so delightful to me."

"You try to make yourself delightful to them, though."

"To keep my hand in. Why not? Poor freckled Tom"—and she burst out laughing—"he runs all my errands, and does everything that I want. It would be hard if I mightn't give him a photo."

"So long as you give him nothing else," said Maude, not unmindful of the scent bottle cork. "Here's Leonora coming down. I'm not going to stick at table all day to please her," and she pushed her plate away preparatory to a rise.

The other girls followed her example, and leaving the bare and crumb-littered table, ran upstairs to prepare for their walk; while Leonora, entering the room slowly, and looking pale and chilly despite the heat of the day, rang the bell for fresh tea and toast to be made for herself.

Of a surety, the Delamaynes' was not a well-regulated household.

THE CASUAL OBSERVER.

WITH THE POLICE.

"**A**RST him for my fare, sir, an' he 'it me slap in the mouth. There's my ticket, sir, and all I wants is my fare."

The speaker is a cabby, and the pugnacious "him" alluded to is a shabby-looking little man rolling about in the iron cage called a dock, like a ship at anchor in a swell. The gentleman is a barber, and has been enjoying himself; but, evidently considering cabby to be a liar upon the subject of fares, he smote him on the mouth. Cabby talks excitedly, the barber thickly, the sum total of his speech being a contemptuous declaration that he "can pay *him*"—a declaration he corroborates by jingling a few shillings in his hand. Cabby calls the policeman "Sir," and evidently does not mind the assault so long as he gets his fare.

The inspector on duty patiently hears both sides, cabby gets his money, and barber rolls away, narrowly escaping a night's lodging in one of the cells. Then, once again, silence falls upon the orderly, white-washed walls of Bow-street, save that a clock ticks hard by where a few pairs of handcuffs hang upon a wall; the inspector's pen scratches busily as he makes formal entries in a big ledger—a sort of earthly recording-angel work—a debtor and creditor account

of the sins of that part of London; and a telegraphic machine, whose wires run to Great Scotland-yard, gives forth its watch-like message.

The clock declares midnight to be near, and the rumble of carriages has increased, for the theatres are being emptied; and, after a pause, a well-dressed female glides in, the night inspector takes his place, and his closely veiled visitor volubly states her grievance in broken English.

"I was zere, and I say, 'No, no, you shall not;' and zen she strike me again and again, and strike me down, and I call 'Poliz, poliz!' but ze poliz are not dere; and see my clothes, they are mud. And zen he say—"

"Ah, there was a man in the case?" says the inspector.

"Oh, yees, there was a man; and zen ze cabman—"

And so on; the inspector fighting his way through a very gooseberry bush of English-Italian elocution, the fruit of which is, that two harpies have been fighting for their prey; and one, the complainant, exhibits, on raising her thick veil, a face painted by her rival with bruises, and also by herself with toilet accessories to conceal the defects—the result being ghastly in the extreme.

Calm and unimpassioned, the inspector hears all, twists his pen over the charge sheet, and then gives his advice concerning summons, &c. "The Casino, identification, sergeant of police," and "that woman" are referred to; and the lady, voluble of thanks, hurries away to dress and visit the Casino, for the purpose of pointing out her assailant.

Silence again.

We are very methodical here. There was a good deal of tramping, marching, and countermarching when the men went out for night duty, and more when the relieved ones came in.

But now we have another case, and a little excitement. A couple of policemen bring in a smart-looking young fellow, very drunk, but perfectly sober according to himself; there are two lady and three gentlemen witnesses, and once more the inspector turns himself into a moral sieve to separate the grains of evidence from the superabundant chaff.

Defendant has been running a civilized muck "In the Strand — in the Strand."

According to the evidence of different witnesses, our friend, clinging to the dock rails, and evidently animated by that spirit which made Mr. Pickwick dash his hat and spectacles insantly upon the kitchen floor, struck a respectable-looking female on the forehead tore off the bonnet of another—said black crape wisp being held up for our edification—knocked down two little boys, and threw a book he carried upon the pavement—a said book bearing Mr. Mudie's well-known label.

In short, the man has acted as the human machine will act with the governing power washed out. He has nothing to say by way of explanation, save that he "wouldn't be guilty of such an act, and that he didn't know anything about it."

Whereupon the charge sheet is read over to him, witnesses sign and undertake to press the charge, and our friend is removed to the cells, in the pleasant solitude of one of which he trolls forth a jovial song; but on following a bull's-eye-armed inspector a quarter of an hour after, in a tour of the cells, we find the "run a muck" wrapped in slumber and undisturbed by rattling key and bolt, or the flash of light.

In another cell are two women who arrived early in the day. One, an Irish lady, rattles out in objurgatory strain upon the shame that she should be kept there. Her words roll out in a perfect stream, tripping one another up so fast that it is absolutely impossible to understand one-eighth of that which she says.

Her companion, on the contrary, is quiet and subdued. She is in widow's weeds *now*, and merely petitions to be placed in a cell to herself, as her companion "does go on so."

Her petition being granted, we see that she is respectably dressed, and evidently in the depressing stage that follows a debauch.

As to the reason for her being there, it is that a maternal law takes care of those who cannot take care of themselves. She was found in the street, apparently oppressed by the heat, having adopted the costume of our first mother, before the epoch of fig-leaves and skins of beasts.

Back in the office another charge is ready for us.

A wild young Irishwoman is in the dock; her face red, furious, and her eyes flashing fiery adjuncts to her verbal arrows.

Her hair hangs about her shoulders, save when she jigs it up into a chignon; neck and shoulders are partly bare, and, like a flag of defiance, she flaunts and waves a ragged old shawl.

She is from the Seven Dials, and has been playfully disposed, fighting, kicking, and scratching; breaking the peace and people's heads, ending by kicking the policeman who took her into custody. Apparently, she is a follower of Darwin, for as she jerks herself about, showering words on every side in a way that displays her excitement, she advances and retires, and waves her flag, and calls the inspector and his assistant "monkeys," her arrows all glancing off the calm official armour. It was not her at all, at all. It was her husband bate her, and some one knocked her down, and she was ill-used, and what did they bring her there for?—*ad infinitum*, till she is removed, defiant to the last, to the cells, leaving exhalations of Kingsley's "Yeast," in the form of "Vitriol Madness," in the dock.

They seem never to have any drunken men here: the dock revolves, the floor heaves and falls, and the singing gas-jets dance like the other objects in the room; but, to a man, the prisoners brought in are "shober as you are shelf, sir?"

So a gentleman declares who has apparently just walked out of *Punch*. What handkerchief he has is fastened under one ear; his hat has been put on for him—far back; he seems ready to slip out of everything, clothes included, into that mental obscurity whither his mind has gone long before; but he still babbles on like a water—no, no! a beer—brook of the foulest and most muddy nature.

The police, searching him as he clings almost frantically to the iron rails, like a passenger to the bulwarks of a Boulogne boat, are "all wrong—quite wrong."

"Whatsh yer bring me here for? I'm aw right, and you may shersh me till you're tired."

"Drunk and incapable" goes down on the inspector's ruled form—the charge sheet of the night, and the five shillings fine to be paid in the morning cannot be hard for a night's lodging and abundant care.

A man in uniform yawned just now, and we catch the complaint. No wonder, for the hours are small, but Bow-street never closes its eyes.

THE MAGIC MIRROR.

A FAIRY TALE FOR THE YOUNG.

SOME people say that nowadays there are no such things as fairies—that their day has long gone by. And some even dare to hold and express the opinion that they never existed. All I can say is, that these people are entirely wrong. For have we not heard of fairies ever since we can remember? Have we not read of them and their wonderful doings, both good and evil, in lots and lots of books? And we know that whatever we read in print *must* be true! Do we not all know and believe that Santa Claus on Christmas Eve comes down the chimney on a broomstick, and fills all empty hanging stockings with all sorts of presents for the little ones, putting in each little stocking what each little owner thereof most desires; and who but a fairy could do that?

Do we not hear of mysterious breakages that nobody has committed; while Mary, the housemaid, most solemnly avers "that it was the cat as did it"? We all know that *our* cat was shut up in the cellar teaching her little kittens to catch mice, far too busily employed to think of being up to mischief; and as no mortal cat could have made its way through fast-shut doors and windows, of course it was a revengeful fairy who had taken the form of one of the feline race, and broken our crockery. Now, as I have most clearly proved to you that fairies still hold their sway over this world, if you do not believe in the story I am about to relate to you, beware of the fairies' wrath, and especially beware of that destructive cat!

About eleven o'clock on a cold Christmas Eve two young girls were sitting over the fire in a pretty chintz bed-room, the sanctum sanctorum of Zoe Leslie, that dark, handsome girl who is lazily unpinning her glossy hair, and letting it fall around her face in great thick waves. That pretty little, fair-haired creature busily engaged disentangling her curly wig is her bosom friend and cousin, Grace Leslie, who has come to spend her Christmas at Fair Holm, as Zoe's home is called.

"What a thing it is to be rich," suddenly exclaimed Zoe, who for some time past had been looking dreamily into the fire, unnoticed by her little companion, who was very

busy waging war against her obstinate locks, and bent upon bringing them into subjection in the form of a steady, sober plait. "I wish I were like you, with 'only my face my fortune,' as the old song says. The idea of my godfather leaving me all his money! He little thought what misery and perplexity it would bring me, instead of happiness and comfort, as he fondly imagined. The dear old man! Filthy lucre! how I abominate you! It is truly said, 'Money is the root of all evil.'"

"Oh, Zoe," broke in her cousin, "do not say that. See how you have it in your power to render others happy."

"Oh, yes—it is all very well for charity, I know," impatiently interrupted Zoe. "I am thinking of my own troubles. Here I am, a rich heiress, and therefore a prize for all adventurers. Why, I have had about twenty offers since I have come into my money—all sorts and sizes, from a lord to a lawyer. It was only last night, at Lady Brown's party, that that little whipper-snapper, Lord Tomkins, had the audacity to propose to me, and actually looked quite offended and astonished when I told him that, like the others, he should have his answer at my cotillon party on Boxing Night. I believe he thought I should have been only too delighted to have the honour of bearing his name, and would jump at his proposal at once!"

"And do you really intend," asked Grace, "to give the poor anxious lovers their answer then?"

"Yes, certainly," answered her cousin, laughing. "As I have obtained my guardian's consent to managing my love affairs as I please, I arranged this party on purpose to avoid the painful duty of having to say a decided 'no' to twenty different suitors, for I know that is how it will end. They only want me for my money, and not for myself. I think it is a capital idea. They will know their fate in the figure of the looking-glass; for as their faces, looking over my shoulder, are reflected in the mirror that I hold in my hand, they will have their answer; for the sign is, if I refuse them I efface their image from the glass, and if I accept them I dance with them."

"But is there not one out of all the twenty," said Grace, "that you like just a little bit?"

"No," said Zoe—"strange to say, not one; and, what is still more strange, the only young man that I *do* like, Harry Lonsdale,

the vicar's son, cannot bear me! He always shuns my society; and when we do happen to come into contact with each other, he is quite brusque, and almost wanting in the common courtesies of polite society."

"Perhaps that is his natural manner," argued Grace. "Some people are by nature rather abrupt."

"No, that is the mystery," despondently answered her cousin. "To others he is the essence of politeness, but to me he always maintains the same cold and extraordinary behaviour."

"Oh, dear! I wish we lived in the time of fairies, and they would perhaps let us have a peep at people's hearts, and then we should know their real worth."

"Happy thought! this is Christmas Eve, when I have heard it said Santa Claus gives us what we most desire. I shall try the old fellow. Let me see—what shall I wish for? Oh, I know, a magic mirror; which, reflecting a person's face, shall disclose to me his true character. That would do splendidly for my cotillon."

A few moments after this conversation, the two cousins, with busy thoughts of the coming eventful night, fell fast asleep.

Christmas Day arrived, commencing with a bright, frosty, sunny morning. The early bells pealing forth merrily, and the sun streaming into the room, combined to disturb the peaceful slumbers of Grace. She started up, but finding Zoe still fast asleep, she debated in her mind whether she would have one, only just one little, delicious snooze, or get up. She very soon decided upon the former course, as being the more agreeable, and was on the point of putting it into execution, when suddenly her eye was caught by something glittering on her cousin's pillow.

"What can it be?"

She ran to see, and found it to be a quaint, plainly-set looking-glass. She began to examine it, and wonder how it could have got there, when she discovered that, held in a certain light, it revealed an inscription which ran as follows:—

"I, the truth and love
Of mortals test and prove."

"See, see, Zoe," cried she, "here is your fairy mirror!"

Zoe started up in alarm at hearing the excited voice of her cousin, but her alarm was soon lost in wondering delight at the possession of the precious fairy gift.

Its mysterious arrival, wonderful inscription, and magic powers formed the topic of the two girls' conversation during their toilet; but they both agreed to keep it a secret till the arrival of Boxing Night.

Christmas Day passed very slowly with them. They thought it would never end, for they were all impatience for the advent of the morrow.

At last, like all other days, it came to a close, and the long - looked - for and all-important day arrived.

All day long the two cousins were busy making pretty little bows of various-coloured ribbons, fairy-like bouquets, wonderful dice of a size fit for a giant to throw, and all sorts of other pretty things, the utility of which all those initiated in the mysteries of the dance of the cotillon would understand.

The pretty and tasteful arrangements did credit to the girls' deft fingers, and they had only just completed them when it was high time to dress for the evening.

About nine o'clock the expected guests began to arrive, pouring in one after another; and for some time there was nothing but a succession of rat-tat-tats at the door, clattering of feet, and rustling of dresses.

The evening commenced with the usual round of quadrilles, vases, &c., of which the young people showed their thorough enjoyment in their bright, happy faces and merry laughter.

Towards the middle of the evening the whisper went round that the cotillon was about to take place, and the dancers soon arranged themselves for this eventful dance.

It was a scene worthy the pencil of an artist. The young beaux, on bended knee, presenting bouquets to the fair ones whom they had chosen for a round in the dance; and each young maiden blushing and with trembling fingers pinning a gay bow on the young man's coat whom she, in her turn, had selected as partner. All the pretty and different devices for the dance were brought into requisition and exhausted, with the exception of the looking glass.

How Zoe's heart beat high now that the important and long-looked-for moment had arrived. She began to quake at the ordeal she had to go through; but the thought of the magic talisman she had in her possession gave her fresh strength and courage.

Many fair damsels preceded her to the conspicuous seat; and merry was the laughter

when the fair occupants, difficult to please, sent partners away with rueful looks!

At last it was Zoe's turn to take her place in the chair, which she did, feeling that it was a question for a partner for life, and not merely for a dance.

The young men who aspired to her hand felt their hearts fluttering, and misgivings beginning to arise; and each hung back, not to be the first to venture.

At last little Lord Tomkins stepped forward with a self-satisfied air, and peeped over Zoe's shoulder in the mirror. He saw his face reflected; but, oh, horror! on his forehead were written in flaming letters, the words—

"Ruin! Debt!"

He stood aghast, transfixed; for it was only too true. Zoe's money was the last straw the drowning man could catch at.

Zoe saw the warning words, and smiled contemptuously as she passed her handkerchief over the mirror.

By degrees all the suitors went to read their fate, and the condemnatory inscription which they bore met their horrified gaze. For all had sought the rich and beautiful girl's hand for the sake of her wealth. The poor wretches were frantic at the thought that their mean motives, in this mysterious and terrible manner, should be exposed to the whole world; till stolen glances in the mirror over the mantelpiece reassured them—the fearful inscription having vanished; and they comforted themselves with the idea that it was only a wild fancy of their own brain.

The game still went on; and, to Zoe's astonishment, she presently saw Harry Lonsdale's face reflected in her mirror, with his bright, honest gaze, and the words "I love you," standing out in bold truth upon his noble brow. He started to see the secret which he had so long kept close and sacred make itself known in spite of him, and in so wonderful and unaccountable a manner; but Zoe, with a little cry of delight, jumped up, forgetful of her fairy gift, which fell to the ground and shivered into a thousand pieces. With a glance of deep regret at the utter destruction of her magic mirror, but with a look of trusting love at Harry, she took his arm for the dance, and, in so doing, proclaimed to all that he was the chosen one.

And so, dear friends, you see Santa Claus, my pet fairy, saved Zoe Leslie from a mer-

cenary and heartless husband, and revealed to her a true and loving heart by means of his fairy gift of the magic mirror.

THE WILMINGTON GIANT.

ALL of us are acquainted with the enormous representations of the human figure in the sculptures of Egypt, which some of those of Greece are said to have equalled. Recent investigators, such as Mr. Squier, of New York, have informed us of the giant sculptures in the cities of Central America. Mr. Layard has unearthed the immense man-headed bulls of Nineveh, the mysteries respecting which are perhaps about to be unravelled by the relics recently brought by Mr. George Smith from Mesopotamia, in the form of inscriptions impressed in clay and incised in stone tablets, which are now being cleansed and deciphered in the British Museum; where also may be found part of the freight of her Majesty's ship *Topaze*, being one of the great human effigies of Easter Island. All these were amongst the examples upon which Mr. Phené, F.S.A., lately based the theory of his paper, "An Age of Colossi." But the feature of immediate interest to the inhabitants of Britain is his assertion that we have still examples of colossal figures wrought by the Celts, which unite this island with the age or the class of people who laboured at producing gigantic emblems in the four quarters of the globe; but, as he showed, within a defined area, or rather zone.

The largest of these, perhaps we may say the largest representation of the human figure ever executed in the world, is on the estate of the Duke of Devonshire, in Sussex, and a few miles inland from Eastbourne; and as operations upon it are now in hand, instituted by the Rev. W. de St. Croix, vicar of Glynde, as secretary to the Sussex Archaeological Society, we propose to give some particulars respecting it, as we concur with Dr. Beddoe, the president of the Anthropological Section, in thinking this part of the subject brought forward by Mr. Phené well worthy attention.

The enormous figure is 240 feet high, and there is one at Cerne Abbas, in Dorsetshire, 180 feet high, both of which have till lately been loosely attributed to the monks of the middle ages, simply because the oldest traditions of those localities give no

indication of the date of their formation, coupled with the fact of their being in the vicinity of ancient monkish residences; and those who gave it as their opinion that they were antecedent to mediæval times, and of Celtic origin, only attempted to support such opinions by conjecture.

In a paper lately read before the Royal Institute of British Architects, in London, Mr. Phené showed reasons against their origin being monkish, as well as in favour of their being Celtic creations; and in consequence of this paper, the Sussex Archaeological Society, with the approbation of the Duke of Devonshire, who headed the list of subscribers, determined to take measures to avert the obliteration by time of the outline of the Wilmington Giant.

Mr. Phené has pointed out that this vast representation is not only in the attitude of the Colossus of Rhodes, but that its proportions are just double those of that statue; that it is unlike any other representation, either in barbarous or classical device, except an almost exact delineation on one of the ancient Gnostic gems; and that, while the last figure is accompanied by solar and lunar emblems, both the carving at Cerne Abbas, and also that at Wilmington, have, in their vicinity, British earthworks of a lunar form.

The descriptions by Cæsar and Strabo of the Celtic deity to which human sacrifices were offered, refer to a gigantic effigy of the human figure, which Mr. Phené argues could not have been, as has been supposed, a great wicker idol, but rather an idol in that form, and surrounded by a palisade, or (*contexta*) "interwoven" barrier, and that in such area the wild beasts and cattle mentioned by Strabo were placed with human victims. The Sussex figure has moreover two staves, as indications of travelling, and Cæsar refers to a Celtic deity as a god of journeying, of which many images or representations then existed.

The fact that a number of curious bronze Celts, and ancient cinerary urns filled with bones, have been found in the vicinity of this figure, which is incised in the chalk cliff, on the range of downs connected with Beachy Head, gives support to the idea of its Celtic origin. A further corroboration exists in the adjoining heights being occupied by British tumuli. But apart from such evidences, one of the great points on which Mr. Phené rests for these figures not having

been made by the monks is, that they are not such as Christian men of a religious calling would have made—they being nude, and otherwise totally unlike early Christian art, while that they are very ancient works is unquestionable. Those who have suggested their mediæval origin have imagined the one at Wilmington to represent a religious devotee, or pilgrim, but it need hardly be observed that this only increases the improbability. That early Christian art should descend to such representations is a proposition without example, while that it should so represent a devotee is impossible; whereas it is just what would be expected in the cruelty of a religion which tolerated human sacrifice. If, as Dr. Beddoe suggested, the explanation given in this paper may probably be the correct one, it solves a difficulty over which more than one antiquary has stumbled, as we find Mr. John James, F.S.A.; getting over the improbability of great wicker idols by suggesting that the victims were put into “large wicker baskets, and *thrown* into the fire.”

AUSTIN CHASUBLE'S LOVE CHANCE.

IN TWO CHAPTERS.—I.

“ONE should try to be contented, Mrs. Bosely. We are all given what is needful for us, you know.”

“So we be, sir, so we be; but the draught do come in at that 'ere door dreadful, it do. I feels it across my lines like the stroke of a stick, no less.”

“Well, you must speak to your landlord; and if he won't do anything, be patient. Patience is—” &c., &c.

Thus I, curate of St. Stephen's-in-the-West, to Mrs. Bosely, ex-laundress and present outdoor pauper, in No. 3, Jinks'-alley, sitting on one of Mrs. Bosely's bottomless cane chairs, and uttering weak platitudes by way of soothing Mrs. Bosely's complaints. Do not sneer, my reader. Is it not the special province of a curate to utter the said mildly moral sentences, and sit on bottomless chairs, for a given period out of every twenty-four hours? “Silence the complaint by relieving the want!” My friend, every old woman in the parish has a draughty door with which she would not part for the diamond mines of Golconda. Were I to give Mrs. Bosely a shilling, and bid her have her door mended, she would spend it in snuff, and go on com-

plaining. Were I to send a man to do it—I don't know, but I think she would resist actively, and, if overcome, would possibly take cold and die.

And, meanwhile, Mrs. Smith and Mrs. Jones, and Mrs. Black, have each their draughty door.

For all these reasons I quietly balanced myself on my purgatorial chair, and said that which was expected from me. Mrs. Bosely's room was about six feet square, and smelt strongly of herring and cabbage—result, probably, of Mrs. Bosely's dinner. The window—two panes of sooty glass—was shut and wedged, my hostess objecting on principle to fresh air. I had had no dinner, no lunch even, having been “visiting” since breakfast. My feet were in a pool of water, which had oozed in from under Mrs. Bosely's door. Something nearly allied—unless my shrinking senses deceived me—to the Norfolk Howard family was leisurely patrolling the back of my neck. The preserved perfumes of dinner and Jinks'-alley made me feel sickish; but it was Mrs. Bosely's day for ten minutes' clerical comfort, and ten minutes she must accordingly have.

“And my rheumatics, sir,” pursued the dame, plaintively, “they be that dreadful I can't abide 'em. They crockles one all up like, they does.”

“Your share of this world's afflictions, Mrs. Bosely,” said I, settling my Roman collar—for the ten minutes were nearly up. “Rheumatism is a very painful thing, but one ought to count it a privilege to bear the crosses which—”

I had got thus far when I was interrupted by a sharp knock at the door.

“There's the taxes, drat 'em!” cried Mrs. Bosely, forgetting her pastor's presence in natural irritability. “Come in, do.”

And accordingly there came in—not the taxes, but a beautiful girl, about nineteen; a girl with big, blue, lambent eyes; with a sweet, flushed face, oval shaped, and dimpled like a baby's; with parted dewy lips, and great masses of glossy bronzed plaits coiled away under the sweeping plume of her broad felt hat; a girl to take away your breath, and make you curse the mud on your boots, and the missing button on your ecclesiastical waistcoat.

“Lord ha' mercy!” quoth Mrs. Bosely, “if 't isn't my young lady. An' how be you, my dear?”

"All right, thanks," said Mrs. Bosely's young lady, in a cheerful, rather loud voice—as, without glancing at me, she shook the dame's stiff, wrinkled fingers in her small, lavender-kidded hand. "How is the rheumatism?"

"Mortal bad, miss, mortal bad!" replied Mrs. Bosely, delighted to begin all over again to a new auditor. "I can't abear 'em, an' that's the truth I tell you. They does crockle one up like."

"Ah, just what they were doing the last time I saw you, grannie," said the young lady, coolly. "And as they are no better, and that 'crockling' propensity must be very unpleasant, I'll tell you what I'll do. Have you ever heard of a Turkish bath?"

"A what, miss?" asked Mrs. Bosely, to whom the word "bath" sounded very much as it might to one of those hydrophobic hounds with whom Mr. Grantley Berkeley used to bore us so much a little while ago in the *Times*.

"A Turkish bath," repeated the girl, with cheerful distinctness, while I sat in silence—and did not laugh. "My uncle is older than you are, and has just had several, which have done him no end of good. You're put into hot water first, I think, and then cold is soused—"

"Water, m'm!" gasped Mrs. Bosely, almost speechless with natural disgust.

"Water, of course," replied her visitor. "What else? And then you're rubbed, and beaten, and your joints are cracked, and—I don't quite know what else; but you come out beautiful!"

Mrs. Bosely groaned faintly—

"I should come out dead," she said, solemnly; "it 'ould kill me on the spot."

"It would cure you," retorted the young lady. "You say the rheumatism is killing you now; so you must want to be cured, and I'll just bring a cab—"

"Look'ee here, miss," said Mrs. Bosely, coaxingly—she evidently had reasons for not offending her visitor by too abrupt a refusal—"that 'ere—cure 'ould cost mints."

"It costs something, of course," replied the girl; "but I shall pay that; and—"

"Miss Julit!" cried Mrs. Bosely, almost driven to desperation, "I couldn't let you. It 'ould be wrong. There, now! We must all ha' patience, you know, miss, in this vale o' tears; and as my clergyman was just a sayin' to me, one 'ad ought to count it

a privilege to carry the crosses as is sent us."

"Oh, nonsense!" interrupted the girl, curtly—"it's all very well to carry crosses if you can't get any one to carry them for you; but, if you can, drop them and be thankful."

"An' then, miss, I do think as the rheumatics is betterin' a little—I do, indeed, miss. They aint so fixed like in the bones; an' I don't believe as I'd 'ave 'em at all if 'tweren't for that 'ere dratted door, as the draught do cut me in 'alf, it do."

"Why, Mrs. Bosely, I sent some one to mend that door."

"Ah! an' indeed 'twas very good o' you, miss. A boy, he did come; but he made such a jawin' an' clatterin' round, I knowed as he couldn't do nothink; an', not to deceive you, m'm, I'm that shaky I can't abear worritin'."

"Why, you troublesome old thing," cried the girl, merrily, "he would have done it all right. Let *me* look at it."

And then she turned round, and espied me in my dark corner by the door.

"Why, who's this, Mrs. Bosely?" she asked, quickly. "Your widowed granddaughter? How do you do, my girl? and why don't you come and take care of your poor old—"

This was *too* much. I had already been shocked to the soul by this girl's levity; but to be taken for an ill-conditioned young woman! Anathematising from the bottom of my heart my classically hairless face and rigidly lengthy coat, I rose up, while Mrs. Bosely exclaimed—

"Why, lor bless you, dear! that be Mr. Jazible, my minister."

"I hope I am not in your way," I said, stiffly, seeing she had the grace to blush, but relenting because the blush made her so wonderfully pretty.

"I beg your pardon, Mr. — Jezebel. I—"

"Chasuble," I corrected, rather warmly.

"Mr. Chasuble, I really beg your pardon; but that corner is so dark, I could not see you properly. Perhaps you can tell me what is to be done for Mrs. Bosely's door."

Her manner was deliciously frank. I suggested that something nailed against the crack—

"The very thing!" she said, promptly. "A capital idea. One of those red flannel sausage things that men carry round in the

snow. Now, Mrs. Bosely, where can I get one?"

"Oh, don't 'ee trouble, miss," replied that individual, very uncomfortably. "It don't matter, the door don't. One gets used to 'em, somehow; and—"

"She likes it!" exclaimed the girl, indignantly. "She likes a draught. Mrs. Bosely, how can you? and at your age, too? Why, how old are you?"

"Sixty-eight, or som'ereabouts," Mrs. Bosely mumbled. "Now don't 'ee worrit, Miss Julit, dear. There aint no doin' nothink with that door nohow, there aint."

"Sixty-eight!" repeated Juliet (what a pretty name it was), "and you don't know how to stop a draught yet! Mrs. Bosely, I'm ashamed of you. And now I think of it, I saw some of those red sausage things in a little shop at the corner. Mr. Chasuble, would it trouble you to buy some for me? I would go myself, but I see it is drizzling, and rain takes all the curl out of my feather."

She extended a little velvet purse as she spoke; and of course I had to take it. It was hardly consistent with the dignity of a priest of the Church to be running errands for strange young ladies; but when those young ladies wear white ostrich plumes, liable to be uncurled by rain, drooping over their shining braids; and when they issue their commands in a sweetly royal tone, and smile on you so as to show two little, rosy dimples at the corners of their mouths, he would be hardly human who could refuse to sacrifice his dignity to their pleasure.

I did not refuse. I went out meekly, and I bought some of the "red sausage things" at the little shop. Had I not been senior curate, I would have carried them off like a coil of gigantic bloodworms over my arm. As it was, I made the shopboy carry them, and accompanied him back to Mrs. Bosely's. I don't know that there was any necessity for me to return there—except to return the purse, I forgot that. Of course I was bound to return the purse to its owner.

Mrs. Bosely's house consisted of one room, opening out of a sort of gutter called, as I have said, Jinks'-alley, a mere stream of mud trickling out of a filthy back street, and terminating in a cesspool and a dead wall. You stepped over an outlying puddle from the former to reach the door; and as I drew near I saw that it stood ajar, and that the entrance was blocked by a chair, sur-

mounted by a vision of two neat, high-heeled boots buttoned well up over a pair of neater ankles. I thought of St. Anthony, and shut my eyes, thereby nearly tumbling into the puddle before-mentioned. The boots disappeared, and Miss Juliet opened the door, with as radiant a smile as if we were old friends.

"Have you got them? Thanks. Well, you haven't been long" (very condescendingly); "and now we had better nail them up at once. I found some nails in Mrs. Bosely's cupboard. Oh, fancy her keeping her butter in a blacking pot!—and here's a flat iron for a hammer. I think you had better get up on the chair, and do the top part."

The ease with which this young lady delivered her commands was superb. I demurred feebly.

"I am afraid it will hardly hold my weight, Miss—Miss— Perhaps the boy—"

But the boy had put his burden down, and disappeared.

"Try," said the girl, with monosyllabic severity.

And I tried. What else could I do? The crazy article creaked terribly, and then gave a portentous snap.

Mrs. Bosely groaned.

"You had better get down again," observed my tyrant, calmly. "I did not know you were so heavy. Never mind. I'll do it, and you can hold the chair, and give me the nails."

She sprang up as she spoke. There was only a gentle creak this time. I thought of St. Anthony again; but how shut my eyes now when I had to hand her the nails? Such a pretty, little, plump hand, too, as took them! It went to my heart to see how often the flat iron came down on the soft, taper fingers instead of the refractory nail.

Mrs. Bosely groaned at intervals. She was evidently in the depths of depression. Three uncombed male heads blocked up the sooty little window without. Audible comments on "whatever parson wor up to with that 'ere swell girl," floated on the air. I felt hot, red in the face—not happy, by any means; and yet I was almost sorry when the task was done, and stepping down from her perch as lightly as a sparrow, she began to draw on her gloves with a triumphant—

"Doesn't your door look beautiful, Mrs.

Bosely? Now, don't you ever complain of a draught again."

"No, miss, that I never won't," said Mrs. Bosely, with prompt fervour.

"And if your rheumatism keeps bad, tell me, and we'll try the Turkish baths."

"Don't 'ee talk on't, miss. 'Taint nothink to speak on, it aint."

"All right. Good-bye, then, or I shall be too late for our 'At home.' Good afternoon, Mr. Chasuble. Much obliged for your help."

And so, with a shake of the crone's hand and a smiling nod to me, she was gone. How dark the room looked!

"Ladies never think as they're a keepin' us waitin' for our teas," grumbled Mrs. Bosely, ungratefully; and seeing her rise, and begin to fumble with a big, black kettle, I took the hint and departed likewise.

I also wanted my tea, or rather my dinner; and yet I was not so hungry now as I had been awhile ago. Out of the puddles of Jinks'-alley, through the dingy smuttiness of Silver-street, past the sunlit bustle of Notting-hill, down a modest row of shops terminating in some equally modest lodging-houses, "giving" (as the French say) on a large dairy, a cabstand, a dissenting chapel, and a music shop; and so into my own abode, the first of the row of furnished apartments.

It had never occurred to me before; but *how* lonely the place looked!

Jane, the lodging-house slavey—a young damsel of plump form and smut-embellished face, clad in a dirty cotton frock, fastened with huge brass pins at the back, which pins had a trick of giving way and bursting out at the smallest provocation, and in a manner which was positively alarming when one regarded the amplitude of her proportions; with a huge chignon, composed of dusty black wool, over which occasional streaks of greasy light hair meandered capriciously; and ornamented by a flapping oval of ragged crochet always on one side—brought me my dinner—*i.e.*, a large fat chop, black without, crimson within, and swimming in a pond of oil and cinders; three humid potatoes, decorated with many black spots; and a segment of cold rice pudding with the mark of her thumb in one side—and spread it on the little square table before the fire. Anglican clergymen are not given to pampering the flesh; but it did not look inviting. Somehow I caught my-

self fancying the damsel of the white feather and sealskin jacket seated opposite to me, and shuddered at the idea of offering her a half of the gory chop! How would those rose-tipped little fingers like to use these dull, blackish-handled knives? Were they smarting from the flat iron now, I wondered.

This was too much. Did St. Anthony sit and dream of his temptress after she was gone? With a violent effort I rose, rang the bell, and resolving to banish mine with the dinner things, took up the *Times* and tried—very unsuccessfully—to bury myself in the report of a recent church congress.

I went to see Mrs. Bosely again in a few days—a very few days; but it is the duty of a curate to look after his flock; and why neglect this venerable sheep? She was alone this time, and though I stayed three quarters of an hour no one else entered; and as Mrs. Bosely appeared in low spirits, I tried to cheer her by alluding to that cheerful young person, Miss Juliet.

"My young lady," groaned Mrs. Bosely. "Ah! she be a terrible lively one, ben't she, sir?"

"Very lively, and amiable," I replied, cautiously. "You have no draught from your door now?"

"Ne'er a bit, sir. Wasn't that like her, now? It be 'most too stived a'present; an' I might ha' friz here all these years, and ne'er a one o' my visitin' gentry—savin' your presence, sir, as of course I don't mean you—would ha' thought o' doin' nothink to keep the cold out. Not they!"

This was ungenerous; also, considering the extreme ill-will with which Mrs. Bosely had submitted to her visitor's alterations, it was inconsistent. I smothered my feelings, however, and merely observed, with mild severity—

"Well, I trust you feel properly grateful for the kindness of Miss Juliet—a—what is her name?"

"Which indeed I don't know, sir, as it's a thing I never can remember is names: not as I could ever say hern, though she telled it me twice; and I knows as it had a devil—if you'll excuse it, sir—at the end on't."

"A devil!" I repeated, staring.

"Aye, sir, as is just what I said, an' with the selfsame look as you has on you now."

I felt flattered.

"'Miss Julit,' says I, 'that ben't your name, surely?'"

"Yes, grannie, it is," says she; 'and if you want to remember it, just you think of the old gentleman.'

"But no, m'm," says I, 'the Lord preserve me from thinking on any sich person as is a-goin' about like a roarin' lion seekin' whom he might devour. An'," says I, 'if you'll excuse me, miss, I'll call you by your christenin' name instead,' which I allers do, sir, reg'lar. God bless her."

I too made up my mind to call her Juliet; for how could I—even taking St. Anthony into question—associate those laughing lips and rosy cheeks with the Prince of Darkness?

THE GHOST IN THE SNOW.

CHAPTER V.

VILLAGE LEGENDS.

"A H, m'sieurs," said the old lady, "it is a story of a long time past—long before I was born, and before this village existed; before there was any town or settlement between the woods and the great lakes. But so terrible a crime was committed at that distant day that the house was accursed by Heaven, and given over to the evil one, who has held possession of it ever since; and whom not even the good priests can banish from it by their prayers.

"At that time—long, long ago," she continued, "the great Company from across the seas, who employed hundreds of men to hunt after furs in the forests, from here, so far away"—sweeping her arm round from the north to the north-west—"to where the frost is eternal, had houses called stations in the woods, to which the hunters and trappers could bring the skins they had collected, to sell to men appointed by the Company to purchase them and store them up till they could be sent away.

"Many of these men, living alone for months and years, seeing no women of their race, but only Indian squaws, took to drinking, and became very wicked. When they met together, at long intervals, they held wild orgies for weeks together, until at length"—again she crossed herself—"they denied both the good God and the devil, and cared not what they did. They seized upon the prettiest young squaws and half-breeds, and enticed or carried others off from their lovers and husbands, and put no constraint upon their wickedness, until they became very

demons in human form themselves; though sometimes the Indians and half-breeds rose up against them, and then there was bloodshed and massacre, and they met with the punishment they deserved at the hands of those whom they had wronged, for they were beyond the reach of the law.

"Among the wildest and worst of these men was one MacSteven; though people said he had some good qualities, and was kind and gentle and generous when he first came from his own far-away country to settle in the woods, before he gave himself up to drink, and cast away all restraint upon his evil passions.

"He was a handsome man, and he grew rich, as most of these men did, in course of years; and, by one means or another, he enticed away, or carried off by force, every woman to whom he took a fancy; and it was told of him that he shot dead a young Indian who came to seek the mistress he had enticed away from him, and also a half-breed hunter, whose wife he had carried off. And everybody at last became afraid of him, for it was believed that he was in league with the evil one.

"Still, all this time, he was a favourite among his own people, who liked him for his courage and generosity and hospitality; and, from time to time, they came in large parties to his house, to hold revels with him for days together.

"What became of the women he enticed or carried off, when he grew tired of them, none could say; but people had their own thoughts on the matter. At length, however, he brought to his home in the woods the most beautiful half-Indian girl in all the country round. Her name was Louise; and those who had seen her said there were few women among the white people who were so handsome as she. And Louise, it was said, was as attached to him as he was to her; and, though she lived alone in the woods with him, he bought her everything she wished for, and cared not how much money he expended upon her. She had dresses and jewels fit for a queen, though she had no one to show them to; but she found pleasure in dressing herself in these rich garments, though there was seldom any save himself to see her.

"Still Louise and he quarrelled terribly at times, and people said there would be murder some day; for he was jealous of her Indian and half-breed friends, who came to

see her; and Louise was proud, and passionate, and fond of being admired, and often complained of being shut up in the woods, and besought him to take her with him when he went to the towns and settlements, as he did usually once or twice in the year. He was jealous, too, of the admiration Louise received from his own people when they came to visit him; and some said he had good reason for this jealousy, and others that he had no reason whatever. The good God only knows! The truth will be never known on earth."

And again the old lady crossed herself devoutly, and murmured a short prayer.

At length, m'sieurs," continued the old lady, "the terrible crime was committed that had been so long anticipated.

"It was winter time, soon after Christmas—just about the same season as this, only it happened so many long years ago.

"Ah, m'sieurs, it was a frightful deed—affreux—horrible! No marvel that the good God set his mark upon the spot, and pronounced it accursed for ever!

"It was during the winter, when the snow lay hard and deep upon the ground, and made it easy to travel by sleigh across the marshes and lakes, that the people at the different stations, scattered wide apart throughout the back woods, from these parts away northward to the frozen seas, were accustomed to assemble together in large parties, and come to visit one another, and pass a day or two—sometimes more—at each station in wild, drunken revelry. Bons camarades they used to call themselves. Ah, me! I fear they were bons camarades of the evil one!

"Sometimes they brought women with them, sometimes they came alone—all men together. M'sieu MacSteven heard that a large party were coming from the next station to pay him a visit; and the Indian boy, Pierre, who was his servant, told afterwards that there was one among this expected party of whom his master was jealous, because he was a fine, handsome young man, who had admired Louise, and to whom he fancied she was secretly attached. He wished Louise not to meet this young man; and gave her permission to go, in company with Pierre, to see her friends, whom she had expressed a desire to visit a few days before.

"Now, however, Louise refused to go. She said that a snow-storm was threatening,

and that the Indian village was far distant, and she would remain and enjoy herself with the party that was coming, and go afterwards to visit her friends.

"M'sieu MacSteven charged her with wishing to stay to see the youth of whom he was jealous. This she denied at first; but M'sieu persisting in his charge, Louise, who was proud and high-spirited, and vain of the beauty that everybody praised, grew angry, and began to taunt M'sieu, and said what if she did wish to see the young man? He admired her, and she had few opportunities to be admired, cooped up as she was in the gloomy forest, seeing nobody, day after day, for months together, but him (M'sieu Steven).

"They came to high words, and M'sieu in his passion was terrible, and heedless of what he said or did. And Louise, brought up among the Indians from her infancy, was fearless, and little less furious in her passion than he.

"The Indian boy, Pierre, heard fierce words pass between them, and then there was a scuffle, and blows were struck, and then came a terrible scream from Louise, as a heavy, crushing blow was struck, at the head of the stairs. Twice was this fearful scream repeated, and then a brief moment of silence was followed by shouts of mocking, fiendish laughter, as if devils were exulting over the success of some evil scheme!

"Pierre was so frightened that he fled from the house, and took refuge in the barn. Presently he heard his master calling him by name, but he was too frightened to reply; and M'sieu MacSteven came downstairs to him, looking pale and ghastly and terrified, as the boy had never seen him before. Pierre was obliged to answer when his name was again called, and he came forth from the barn; and M'sieu MacSteven—though darkness was already coming on, and a storm was threatening—bade him go home to see his friends alone, as Louise had determined to stay to see the company.

"Monsieur MacSteven spoke in so strange a voice, and his looks were so wild, that the boy did not dare to say it was so late, and the weather looked so threatening that he would prefer to wait till morning, though he was really afraid to set out for the distant Indian village at that late hour, with every probability of being caught in the storm; besides, he was terrified by what he had

heard, and by what he feared had occurred. He would have made an excuse if he had dared; but these rough men were accustomed to wait upon themselves in their revels, when they had not women with them, so he could not make an excuse by offering to wait upon the expected party. Moreover, he was afraid of harm coming to himself if his master should suspect that he fancied that something was wrong.

"So he made no reply, but pretended to set out at once; though, instead of so doing, he concealed himself again in the barn, intending to remain throughout the night, and set out on the morrow. The threatened snow-storm soon commenced, the snow falling lightly at first, but speedily increasing; while the wind rose rapidly. It was already dark, and Pierre laid him down amidst some straw in one corner of the barn, and tried to compose himself to sleep; but the fright he had received, the strange looks of his master, and the terrible suspicions he entertained, kept him awake.

"The barn was in the rear of the house, separated from it only by a thin wooden partition; and Pierre was soon aroused from his dismal thoughts by a noise of hammering, proceeding apparently from the back room on the upper floor of the house. The sound seemed to shake the partition close to his head; and he bethought him that a large chest, in which skins were sometimes kept, stood in the upper back room against the partition. His master, he thought, must be fastening up this chest with nails; but why he should do so Pierre could not for the moment conceive, for he well knew that the chest was empty, and had been so for some time past.

"Ah, messieurs," sighed the old lady, "M'sieu MacSteven's wicked object for fastening this chest was soon discovered.

"The sound of the hammer was still ringing in the ears of the terrified Pierre, when he heard the distant jingle of sleigh bells. He knew the meaning of this. His master's expected guests, who it was thought would be delayed by the threatening aspect of the weather, were approaching. They came rapidly nearer and nearer, hurrying on to gain shelter from the storm.

"Soon Pierre heard the tramp of the horses' hoofs—for the soft falling snow had not yet covered the frozen soil—and the sound of men's voices, in rude, boisterous merriment.

"M'sieu MacSteven also heard his guests approaching. The hammering ceased a few moments, then it was rapidly resumed for a brief space; and then Pierre heard the hammer thrown to the floor from his master's hand—for the position conveyed every sound to his ears—and the chest was dragged along the floor, nearer to the corner of the room. Presently, M'sieu MacSteven came downstairs to receive his guests, and Pierre heard a woman's voice among the rest, and recognised the voice as that of Mdle. Desiré—the wife, as she was called, of the m'sieu who lived at the next station.

"The guests had hardly arrived before the storm set in in earnest. The wind blew, and the snow fell thick and fast; and fierce gusts whistled wildly amidst the forest trees, and shook the house and barn to their foundations as they swept furiously around them. But the wild tempest without only seemed to make the guests merrier in their snug shelter. They watched the drifting snow and driving sleet, and listened to the howling of the wind; and blessed their good fortune which had enabled them to reach their destination before the storm came on in its fury. They ate and drank, and talked, and sang, and laughed, and their merriment grew constantly more and more boisterous; and Pierre, the Indian boy, whom M'sieu MacSteven believed to be far away, lay listening to the storm without and the wild revels within doors, and heard all that was going on.

"The guests had brought music with them, as was their custom when they set forth on these rounds of visits; and by and by they rose from the table, and made preparations for the dance. There was but one woman with them—Mdle. Desiré—but that was no matter. When they had not women, men took men for their partners in the rude dance; and the upper back room was brilliantly lighted up with torches, and the fiddlers played merrily, and the floor shook beneath the heavy tread of the dancers, who, flushed with drink, stamped their feet violently, and yelled, and leaped, and filled the air with fearful curses, amidst their wild laughter. Mdle. Desiré's merry laughter could be distinguished by Pierre, ringing forth loud and shrill amidst the hoarser voices of the men; and, far across the wide expanse of snow-covered ground, the torch-lights gleamed so brightly from the windows of the upper room, glittering amidst the falling snow, and

making it to appear like sparks of fire, that Pierre, weary of lying awake, was tempted to rise and gaze forth upon the bright stream of light, which might have been visible through the storm, many miles distant.

"At length, the mad revellers began to grow weary, or were overcome by the liquor they drank, and one after another fell off from the dance. The music grew fainter, and soon ceased to be heard, and silence reigned within the house. Pierre crept back to his corner amongst the straw, and while listening to the storm which still raged without, fell sound asleep.

"He woke in the morning, long before day-break. The storm had ceased, and the moon shone forth bright and clear in the cloudless sky. The lad shivered with cold, and for some moments was unable to conceive where he was. At length he recollected the events of the past evening; and afraid of being seen by his master when the latter should awake, he quitted the barn, and, wading knee-deep through the fresh fallen snow, made his way towards his native village. Exercise soon restored the circulation of his blood, and brought warmth to his half-frozen limbs; and now he began to consider how he should act, and whether he should acquaint his friends with his dreadful suspicions, when they should inquire of him respecting Louise. He resolved finally to tell all that he suspected; but the way to his village was long and wearisome. He had eaten nothing since noon on the previous day; and as the keen frosty air sharpened his appetite, he soon felt desperately hungry and weary, though he had still many leagues to travel through the snow. Fortunately, just as day was breaking, he fell in with an Indian trapper—one of his own village people—who took him to his hut in the forest near by, and set food before the hungry lad.

"I have told you, m'sieurs," continued the old lady, "that Louise was a half-breed—the daughter of a French Canadian, by an Indian mother. The trapper, whose name was Elkfoot, but who was known as Tom by the English traders, was her uncle—her mother's brother; and he asked after his niece, and wanted to know whether she were coming to the village to visit her friends, as was her custom at least once during the winter.

"Pierre related to Elkfoot what he had seen and heard on the previous day, and spoke

of the suspicions he entertained. The Indians were proud of Louise's beauty. She was both admired and loved by the people of her native village; and Elkfoot, when he had heard Pierre's story, resolved to ascertain the truth, and vowed to take fearful vengeance if any harm had befallen his niece. Pierre and he remained a long time at the hut, deliberating upon the best course to pursue. Elkfoot was undecided whether to go at once to the station and demand to see Louise, and if she were not forthcoming to denounce M'sieu MacSteven as her murderer in the presence of his assembled guests; or whether, being somewhat doubtful of obtaining justice from the English traders, to take the law into his own hands, and take prompt Indian revenge; while the boy, Pierre, who held his master in great dread, was afraid to appear before him after what had occurred.

"They were still in earnest argument, when three sleighs, all laden with passengers, were seen approaching the hut. The occupants of these sleighs were the late guests of MacSteven, who, finding him unusually dull and distraught, had shortened their visit, and on awaking from their debauch, had resolved to set forth immediately after breakfast for the next station instead of remaining over the day as they had intended; and it appeared that their host, instead of pressing them to remain, as he would have done had he been in his ordinary hospitable mood, had speeded them on their way, and had seemed to feel relieved by their departure. Pierre, who recognized these people, told Elkfoot who and what they were; and the latter immediately rushed forth from the hut, and arresting the progress of the travellers, inquired of one, who appeared to be the chief of the party, whether he had seen Mdlle. Louise at M'sieu MacSteven's station.

"'Hilloa! What, Trapper Tom, is it you?' cried the person to whom he had addressed himself. 'Have we seen Mdlle. Louise, ask you? No, boy. She's with her friends at the village, is she not? The station is dull as ditchwater without her, and MacSteve is in the dumps by reason of her absence, I suppose. We should all have had a fit of the blues if we had remained there another day, as we purposed.'

"Elkfoot replied that Louise was not at the Indian village, which he had quitted only on the previous day; and then he re-

lated what he had heard from Pierre. The party, surprised and startled by what they now heard, questioned the Indian boy closely. They now recollected many things that had occurred at the station which looked suspicious, though they had paid little attention to them at the moment, and began to think that Pierre's suspicions might be correct.

"Some among them, however, said it was no business of theirs. It rested between Louise's friends and Mac, to settle between themselves. Others, with whom Louise was a favourite, and especially Mdlle. Desiré and the young man of whom MacSteven was said to be jealous, declared that justice should be done, whatever might be the result; and insisted upon returning to the station, and carrying Elkfoot and Pierre with them.

"Elkfoot sprang eagerly into one of the sleighs, and Pierre was compelled to enter another sorely against his will, for he feared his master would kill him.

"The sleighs were put about, and in another hour they were again approaching the station they had so lately left.

"As they drew near, the Indian boy touched the arm of him who drove the foremost sleigh.

"'Ugh!' he exclaimed, and he raised his forefinger, and inclined his ear in the attitude of one who listens. At a sign from the head of the party all the sleighs were stopped for a few moments, and the tap, tap of a hammer on some metallic substance was distinctly audible.

"'I heard just so, before m'sieurs came last night,' muttered the boy, in accents of terror.

"'Slowly and softly, lads,' cried the driver of the leading sleigh; and the three vehicles passed slowly and almost silently over the yielding snow.

"Quietly as they proceeded, however, it appeared that their approach was either seen or heard. The taps of the hammer, which had fallen regularly from the moment when they were first audible to the returning party, suddenly ceased, and profound silence succeeded.

"M'sieu MacSteven came not forth to welcome his returning visitors, or to congratulate himself and them that they had altered their minds, and were still his guests.

"He came not downstairs to greet them

when they entered the house. They found no one to welcome their return. A strange, ominous silence prevailed. They called aloud, but no answer was returned; and it was almost with a feeling of dread that they ascended the stairs.

"The foremost to enter the room started back in dismay, and uttered a cry of terror. The others pressed forward in a body, and, to their horror, beheld the body of their late host suspended by a cord to a large hook, affixed to a beam that crossed the centre of the ceiling.

"A chair, by means of which the suicide had apparently placed the loop on the hook, after having previously fixed the noose round his neck, had been kicked over after the body was suspended, as the feet reached within a few inches of the floor. To spring forward and cut down the body was the natural impulse after the first shock felt at the sight they beheld. The body was quite warm; in fact, life still existed after it was cut down and laid upon the floor. But, after a few faint sighs and convulsive movements the suicide ceased to breathe. They had arrived a few moments too late.

"It was evident that M'sieu MacSteven had not hanged himself until he had seen his late guests approaching, and most probably had suspected the object of their return; for the hammer with which he had been engaged as they neared the house was lying on the floor, beside a few nails, which had not yet been driven into the chest-lid he had been nailing down.

"That the noose must have been prepared beforehand was evident, but whether with the intention of using it, save as a *dernier ressort*, was not known. Some thought that suicide had been determined upon. Others believed that if certain arrangements could have been carried into effect, flight had been resolved upon; or why was time occupied in nailing down the chest? And why was it that the pockets of the suicide were found to be filled with gold and bank notes?

"These latter believed that M'sieu MacSteven had resolved never to be taken alive, and that but for the return of his guests the noose would not have been used.

"Perceiving that life was extinct in the body of their late host, the horrified guests, who had little anticipated such a result to their annual visit to the station, proceeded to open the chest. This was a difficult task, the lid being so firmly nailed down. But it

was at length accomplished, and inside was found the body of the murdered Louise—fully attired, and with the arms laid across the bosom in a natural position, as if she were asleep. Death had evidently been caused instantaneously by a blow on the back of the head, which had crushed the skull.

"The murder had not, probably, been intentional. The blow had been struck in a moment of ungovernable passion, caused by jealousy, and had been the result of the quarrel listened to by the Indian boy, Pierre. Expecting his guests to arrive, the murderer, after finding that life was extinct in the victim of his jealous passion, had hastily placed the body in the chest, and had been employed in nailing down the lid, as heard by Pierre, when he was interrupted by the approach of the sleighs. The lid, however, was sufficiently confined to prevent its being raised by any curious visitor, and dragging the chest into a corner, he had gone to welcome his guests, excusing the non-appearance of Louise by stating that she had gone to the Indian village on a visit to her relatives and friends.

"The horror of the story, m'sieurs," continued the old lady, "consists in the fact that, during the wild, wicked revel that ensued, while the party were eating and drinking, and engaged in singing songs, and while fiddles were playing merrily, and dancing was going forward, the body of the murdered victim of jealousy lay, silently appealing, as it were, to Heaven for judgment, in the very room that was so brilliantly lighted up for dancing and feasting; and it is said that many of the revellers seated themselves upon the chest and partook of refreshments, as they rested themselves after their frantic exertions; and one fell asleep upon it, worn out with fatigue and overcome by drink, and there slept until morning, little thinking what lay beneath him, separated from him but by one thin, painted board.

"What horror must have been felt by the murderer throughout that dreadful night, while the storm raged with unusual fury round the house, as if the elements were denouncing the terrible crime that had been committed!

"No one can tell. But it is little wonder that even his hardened conscience was touched, and that in his remorse and despair he listened to the suggestions of the demons who urged him to suicide.

"It is little marvel that, since that day—long years ago—the spot has been held accursed by Heaven, and that demons have kept sway over it, and held revels in memory of the horrid deed, being ever most active in times of storm and tempest.

"You, m'sieurs, have escaped fortunately. Many who have been driven by the storm to pass a night in yonder accursed abode have for ever after rued the hour in which they approached it. May the great God and the blessed Virgin protect those who inadvertently go near the spot, and avert evil from them!"

And once more crossing herself devoutly, the old lady thus concluded her story, which had been eagerly listened to by the assembled neighbours, who had every now and then, by shaking their heads gravely or by nodding at one another, attested, as it were, to the truth of the story.

LAYS OF THE SHORT ONE.

THE RAINY DAY.

FLEET-STREET is wet, and splashed, and mushy,
The horses' legs and the wheels are slushy;
To one's trousers legs all the mud fast clings,
And each wet umbrella the rain-drops flings—
For the street is splashed and dreary.

My feet are cold, and wet, and soaking;
From out of my boot a wet toe is poking;
My thoughts still cling to the precious past,
When my coat was new—boots fresh from the last,
If the street was splashed and dreary.

Cheer up, my Briton, it's no use whining;
You're under a cloud, and your coat is shining;
Some time or other we're all in the dumps,
But sooner or later we turn up trumps,
Though the street be splashed and dreary.

TABLE TALK.

A FEW words of tribute to the memory of Shirley Brooks, who died on the 23rd of February. A genial English writer, a wit, a clever conversationalist, he was the centre of a large circle of friends. His was the hand that wrote the first line in the pages of this magazine upon its appearance in 1859, and for years after he contributed to it pleasant sketch, poem, essay, and novel. Any reader who turns over the pages of the early volume will find the words "Shirley Brooks" constantly recurring at the end of bright and sparkling papers. "The Silver Cord," one of the most powerful novels in *ONCE A WEEK*,

was also from his pen. For "his novels rank far above the ordinary mass of fictions as pieces of literary workmanship." He was a hale, young-looking man for his years—fifty-eight—and might have been looked upon as one with yet a long career. For years past he had been connected with *Punch*, which owed to him that pleasant, wise, and witty political condensation known to all readers as "Essence of Parliament." On the death of Mark Lemon he succeeded to the editorial chair, which he retained until his death. On turning to our first volume and its opening page, one has that wondrously pathetic death-bed scene described by Thackeray involuntarily brought before us, and a word seems to link the passing away of Colonel Newcome with that of this well known-litterateur. That word is the first in this long array of volumes. It was written by Shirley Brooks—that word is, "Adsumus."

THE RESOURCES of that wonderful department—the Post Office—were put to almost as severe a test on Wednesday, the 11th February last, as they were on St. Valentine's Day; but the officials were equal to the occasion, and delivered 158,000 letters, revealing to a puzzled public the secret that this bold sentence, "The Very Button," which has appeared on the walls of London, and in many newspapers, was a patent two-hole linen button, lately introduced and made by Messrs. Green and Cadbury, of Birmingham. The button proves to be of the best quality, and of extraordinary strength.

NOW THAT MARCH sets in, and one may reasonably hope that the cold weather has gone, with the exception of an occasional frost, it may not be out of place to quote the following quaint experiment tried a hundred years ago by some savans at St. Petersburg:—"At a time when the quicksilver was found to have fallen extremely low, and the cold consequently to be very intense, the mercury being by De Lisle's thermometer—which is best adapted for measuring the degrees of cold, as Farenheit's for measuring those of heat—being, I say, by this thermometer, fallen to 250 degrees, they increased the cold by mixing the fuming spirit of nitre, and having been left to cool in snow, with half as much snow in a common glass, stirring it till it becomes of the con-

sistence of pap, the thermometer being dipped into this composition the quicksilver sunk to 470 degrees. Upon a repetition of this experiment, when the mercury (which contrary to the manner of water, instead of dilating, still continued to contract with increased cold) sunk to 500 degrees, they broke the glass, and it was found frozen into a hard, solid mass; but what was most extraordinary, it bore the hammer like a common metal, and was beat into the shape of a half-crown. At last, however, it began to break, and being thawed recovered its former fluidity."

THE HOME of the Ashantee at Coomassie must be pleasant for those who sojourn there. We learn that "bloody scenes are of daily occurrence in the streets, where the executioner strikes down the unsuspecting victim, running his knife through his cheeks, and dragging him off to some sacrifice and to exorcise some spirit." With such a religion any Ashantee might be excused for turning infidel.

A DRAMATIC PUZZLE.—After a tremendous run, Miss Marie Wilton announces the removal of Robertson's popular comedy for one by Sheridan. The advertisement says that "The School for Scandal" has been for some weeks in preparation. Surely this should read, "Scandal for School."

RATHER a keen piece of sarcasm is indulged in by the author of "Eldorado," the new burlesque at the Strand Theatre. He makes the son of one of the characters welcome his father to Paris, and ask him if he had a pleasant railway journey. "Oh, yes," says the parent, "capital: we had a railway accident." "Indeed! What was it?" says the son. "We arrived safely!"

Contributions should be legibly written, and only on one side of each leaf.

Communications to the Editor should be addressed to the Office, 19, Tavistock-street, Covent-garden, W.C.

All Contributions are attentively considered, and unaccepted MSS. are returned on receipt of stamps for postage; but the Editor cannot hold himself responsible for any accidental loss. No unaccepted MSS. will be returned until a written application has been made for them.

Terms of Subscription for ONCE A WEEK, free by post:—Weekly Numbers for Six Months, 5s. 5d.; Monthly Parts, 5s. 8d.

ONCE A WEEK

NEW SERIES.

No. 324.

March 14, 1874.

Price 2d.

JACK'S SISTER; OR, WOMANLY PAST QUESTION.

CHAPTER XVII.
FAIR AND FICKLE.



HERE is there a gayer scene than the principal promenade of a well-filled watering place in the visitors' season? A fine sunshiny day, with a good sea rolling up on the beach, and filling the air with roar and foam and whirlwinds of dia-

mond drops; the inner line of pavement crowded with the daintier idlers of either sex, the middle line of road a moving river of gay carriages and dashing equestrians, and the outer line of gravel filled with invalids being dragged along in their Bath chairs, or seated, book in hand, on the benches; children, with fluttering hair and bare sturdy legs, rushing after their hoops, whooping and shouting in unrestrainable glee; nursemaids lingering to gossip with stiff, red-coated soldiers; rusty old fishermen inhaling the salt sea spray; and girls who, fortunate in the possession of good ankles and hardy complexions, do not mind exposing the same to the assaults of a strong sea breeze, and the admiration of the passers-by.

No place like St. Leonard's for such a sight—St. Leonard's, which rejoices in the

possession of a promenade nearly a mile and a half in length, and, with one exception, perhaps the gayest in all England. Jack Leyburn had been a week at the Queen's, but his delight in the novel scene was as intense as on the first day; and he could not help stopping short, when half-way down the Marina, and exclaiming, while holding his hat on with one hand—

"By Jove, Clif, this beats German spas all to fits. What a sea! Did you ever see such glorious whoppers of waves?"

"And what a crowd!" said Clifton, who, having grown "weel acquent" with old ocean at Brighton, Scarborough, and other watering places, was more interested in the "cara humana" than the beauties of nature. "Seems to me the place is unusually full. There goes Lord Londesborough's turn-out. Spanking pair of bays, arn't they? Hallo, here's little Vipont. I thought he went to Scotland in September. How do, Vipont? By George, Jack, that girl rides well, doesn't she? Swings to her horse like a piece of music."

"There's something so awfully strong and free and dashing about it," said Jack, still intent on the waves. "How I should like to tumble right in. Hallo! I beg your pardon, ma'am," as he nearly tumbled over an invalid in her chair instead, and was hauled off by Clifton.

"My dear Jack, have some regard for your comrade, if you've none for yourself. That was old Lady Tempest, a dear friend of my mother's, and the vilest old shrew in Christendom. You've brought on an attack of her asthma, and I shall be the sufferer."

"Why you?"

"Because your assault obfuscated her senses for the moment, and she only recovered them in time to recognize me in the act of sloping. I saw a baleful glare in her sound eye, and venture to predict that—Oh, Mrs. Claremont, how do you do? How pleasant that you should be here at

the same time as ourselves! Been calling on my mother already? Just my luck to be out. You must let me make up for my loss to-morrow, and bring a friend. By the way, where is he? Gone on!"

And with a profusion of bows and apologies Clifton hurried after, scattering nods and salutations on every side till he came up with Jack, who, with his grey "wide-awake" on the back of his head, and his arms folded on the sea wall in front of their hotel, was drinking in great gulps of salt and spray with an enjoyment which rendered him utterly indifferent to his friend's remonstrances and rebukes.

"Cutting off just as I was about to introduce you to one of the prettiest women in England, and obliging me to race after you like a Bobby after a runaway pick-pocket!" Clifton cried, out of breath.

"Why, you didn't expect me to stand gaping while you were talking social twaddle on a day like this!" Jack answered, laughing. "Hang it, Clif, can't we get away from the people? One might as well be in Rotten-row, or"—with the greatest simplicity—"the Grove-road on a Sunday at home."

The idea of coupling a provincial Sabbath turn-out to the great human parade-ground of the Row was too much for Clifton. He went off into fits of laughter, in the midst of which a fresh group of acquaintances hailed him with exclamations of surprise and pleasure; and Jack, finding they seemed likely to go on talking interminably, took an opportunity for escaping, making his way through the crowd with great strides, which were fast carrying him out of the bustle and whirl, when arrested by a cry of distress.

"Oh, Fluff, Fluff! Come back, Fluff! Oh, what shall I do?"

Something white and woolly came bounce against Jack's legs at the same moment; and, guided by instinct as to the cause of the outcry, he made a vigorous clutch at a small white dog, and, seizing it by one ear, looked round in search of the owner.

That individual was within a couple of yards of him.

A little girl, very little—quite a child, indeed—in a very short muslin dress, fluttering in the wind so as to display rather more than a pair of the prettiest little feet in the prettiest little high-heeled shoes ever imagined. Jack, of course, never noticed the

shoes; but even St. Anthony could not have helped being "'ware of" the feet, or the "something more"—by courtesy ankles—or the cascade of crinkly, crocus-coloured floss silk, blown by the wind straight out from the straight, slim figure; or of the short, wavy fringe of gold over two wonderfully appealing eyes, blue as the summer sky above, and shining straight up into his, out of a sweet, transparent little face, like a wax doll in a Regent-street toy shop.

Unappreciative as Jack was in regard to the fairer sex, even he could not help thinking he had never seen anything so surprisingly pretty in his life. Besides, like most big, burly fellows, he was rather fond of children than otherwise; and this little creature seemed to him a mere baby, a little school-girl, hardly in her teens; and on whom it would have been brutal to frown. There was something quite protecting in his good-humoured smile, as glancing from the puddle to a long piece of blue ribbon in the "child's" hand, he said, cheerfully—

"Don't be afraid. I've got him quite safe. It is your dog, I suppose?"

"No, it's not mine," she said, in a pretty little, confiding tone, whose infantine treble fell pleasantly on Jack's ear after his own gruff bass, "or I don't think he would have run away. But it belongs to a friend; and oh! I don't know what I should have done if he had been lost. Thank you so much."

"Not at all," replied Jack. "I'm glad he came across my path."

"He's a naughty, naughty Fluff," said the child, kissing the offender's head while he struggled to escape from her hold. "Stay quiet, sir, while I fasten on your collar."

"Let me," Jack volunteered, seeing that Fluff's jumps made the operation difficult, and pitying the tiny fingers engaged on it. "Be still, you brute," as Fluff snapped at him. "There now, that's all right."

The little fingers and his had met more than once during the fastening; but his heart beat none the faster. Insensible Jack! And the smile with which he answered her eager thanks was perfectly unembarrassed and genial.

"You ought to leave your friend to take her own dogs out," he said in reply; "or have a whip for him."

"I would, only it looks so—fast," she suggested, raising her big blue eyes remonstratingly.

"Oh, in a woman—yes," Jack answered. "But," with a reassuring smile, "*you* needn't trouble about that sort of thing yet. Have you got the ribbon tight? Twist it round your hand."

"So?" she asked, attempting the task with unskilful docility.

"No. Why, that's the way to sprain a mite of a wrist like yours. This way. There! Good-bye."

And he did it for her with patronizing good nature, wondering half unconsciously the while at the contrast between the baby fist and his huge knuckles.

What a wee little fairy it was, to be sure!

He went on his way, tramping over the heavy shingle of the beach, and sitting down to rest now and then till he had gone as far as Fairlight and back; but the little incident of the day did not altogether escape his mind; for later in the evening, when Clifton and his mother were discussing some of the rival beauties of the place, Jack struck in with the blunt remark—

"Clif never sees any beauty except in girls between eighteen and five and twenty. I say he's wrong, out and out. I never saw any young woman yet as beautiful as you are, Lady Gore; nor any girl half as sweet-looking as a child I met out walking to-day—a bit of a golden-haired thing in short frocks"—(Jack had not forgotten the feet, &c.)—"but prettier by ever so much than any of the beauties he's been raving about."

"There, Clifton—never say that you are your old mother's only admirer," said Lady Gore, with an amused smile at her guest's naïveté. "I am sure, Jack, that the little golden-haired girl and I ought to be very much obliged to you."

Clifton laid his hand very affectionately on Jack's shoulder.

"That was a jolly speech of yours, old fellow," he said, gaily. "But don't you go making me second fiddle with the little mother, or I might be tempted to retaliate in kind."

And Lady Gore's blue eyes were lifted inquiringly, for Clifton's tones had an unconscious earnestness, his eyes a far-away look, as though he were seeing some sweet face in the distance. Were his thoughts wandering to Enid, and the good-night kiss he had so coveted?

Many months afterwards the words came back to Jack Leyburn's memory, but not in

connection with his sister. He hardly heard them now.

About the same hour on the same evening, the Delamaynes were gathered in their drawing-room after tea; Mrs. Delamayne lying on her couch, a costly Indian shawl hiding the shabbiness of her old silk gown, and chatting with the curate's wife, a homely little body, who was rather fond of dropping in to be patronised by the Hon. Mrs. Delamayne. A little farther off, playing whist at the centre table, were the rector—a tall, stout man, with a large nose and a shining bald head, like a pink china globe surrounded by a fringe of white hair—his curate, Percy White, the junior pupil, and the widowed Leonora, who, under the combined influence of *poudre rosée*, false hair, and shaded lamplight, really looked quite interesting and elegant in floating robes of some gauzy black material, and a little rosette of white tulle making the fashionable mockery of a modern widow's cap perched on the top of her chignon. Nearer to the window, Maude reclined in an easy chair, fanning herself languidly, and addressing a word now and then to the couple by the sofa; while outside, in the verandah, Kitty's white muslin robes, in close contiguity to the dark form of the Rev. Mr. Mostyn, might be seen pacing slowly up and down; and quite in the opposite corner of the room, away from the rest of the party, and with a light to themselves, those two innocent children, Baby Delamayne and Tom Bruce, were amusing themselves very nicely and quietly, as children should, with a game of chess.

Could a more charming family picture be found in all England? Surely the irregularities of the morning must have been an illusion. At any rate, let us remember that we intruded ourselves uninvited. The Delamaynes were never "at home" till after lunch.

I have said that Baby and Tom were "amusing" themselves with a game at chess, because I don't think they were actually playing one. Baby's pinky white fingers did indeed rest on one of the pawns, and Tom's broad and somewhat freckled fist was hovering in close proximity; but no move had been taken for some time; and though the boy was speaking in low but most enthusiastic terms of admiration, it was not of his companion's play.

"Yes, I saw you pass the library window,"

he said, in answer to some remark of hers; "and oh, Baby, you did look so lovely! Of course, you took well. Besides, they say Williams is a great ladies' man—the beast!—and always takes the prettiest girls best."

"Well, I don't see why you need call him a beast for that," said Baby, pouting. "Would you have liked him to take me badly?"

"Now, Baby, of course not."

"Then I think he did. I know I squinted, the sun was so strong in my eyes. You'll have to be content with it, Tom, for I'm sure I won't go to the trouble of being taken again."

"Anyhow, it can't help being prettier than any other girl," said Tom, trying to console himself for the idea of the squint. "And did you wear my flowers, Baby?"

"Your flowers!"

"Now, Baby! Those I picked for you, I mean. You said you would."

"As if they would have been fresh by one o'clock."

"You kept some that Captain Starling gave you quite fresh for two days."

"Did I? Very likely. Captain Starling is a friend who—— Tom, if you look so ridiculously miserable, Maude will see you. Of course I wore them, you stupid boy."

"Oh, Baby, what a darling you are. Please forgive me. How I shall prize it when I'm away at Oxford—that horrid Oxford! Only five weeks more, and I shall be shut up there, while you— Yes, give me your hand; do, dear Baby, just for one moment. No one's looking."

"What do you want it for?" asked Baby, dropping something like a snowflake, dimpled by two or three raindrops, into Tom's red palm. "You horrid boy! How dare you?" as the round, freckled face was suddenly stooped over it. "Do you want me to rap your head with the chessman? And Leonora just looking this way, too! Tom, I hate you."

"Now, Baby!" Poor little Bruce knew no more pathetic adjuration than these two words! "You don't. Say you don't, Baby, please! Oh, dear! and I love you so. You're not going away, are you?"

"Yes, I am. Don't be foolish, Tom. I'm tired."

And Baby rose, regardless of the hold on her dress which would fain have kept her still.

"Have you finished your game, Baby?" asked Mrs. Delamayne, as the crocus-coloured head came into view from its retired corner. "Get me the paper, please. Mrs. Glover says St. Leonard's never was so full; and I want to see if any of our acquaintances are among the late arrivals."

"Our acquaintances" meant the aristocracy, that particular branch of society which shunned the Hon. Mrs. Delamayne most scrupulously.

"The Gores are here, mamma," said Maude. "Don't you remember the lovely old lady with the tall husband and handsome son? They were here the winter before last for a fortnight. Oh, and another time without the son. Somehow, I only met him once, and he wasn't introduced to me. It was horribly provoking; for he's just the best-looking young man I've ever seen."

"Yes, we met him twice this morning," observed Kitty, who in passing the window caught scraps of whatever conversation was going. "And walking with such a giant!—a wild Irishman, I should think, about seven feet high, and broad in proportion. You ought to know who he is, Claude," turning to her lover. "Can't you tell us? I'm dying to know."

"My walks lead me away from town more than towards it," said the young vicar, apologetically. "It is not a very interesting matter, though, Kitty, is it?"

"The Gores are great swells," observed Maude. "Their son would never walk about arm in arm with a snob. Baby thought it might be the Marquis of Bute."

"Bute? Nonsense!" cried Kitty. "I know his face well enough from the photographs. This is an ugly man."

"Oh, any one would look ugly beside Mr. Gore," said Baby. "What is it, mamma?"

"Why, that this must be your hero. Look here, among the people staying at the Queen's—Lady Gore, Mr. Clifton Gore, and J. Leyburn, Esq. Lady Gore has had rooms for the last fortnight there."

"Why, that must be Jack Leyburn," cried Percy White, looking up from the cards. "My brother Ned's great chum at Oxford. He was stroke in the University eight this year; an awfully rich fellow, I believe, and as big as an elephant. Oh, yes, I've seen him. We are both Homeshire families, you know, and he used to come over to Bib-

chester in the vacations to see Ned. His father's a banker at Marshton Fallows."

"Then I know all about him," said Mrs. Delamayne. "Leyburn of Leyburn Hall, of course. I met him once, and it is a beautiful place in Warwickshire, just over the border. Dear me, I had no idea he had a son as young as you represent this young man. Yet I heard him speak of the bank. Percy, you ought to call on your brother's friend, it would be only kind."

"Ask him to come and see you here, Percy," said Maude, amiably. "I often think it must be dull for you, seeing none but our friends."

"Oh, Leyburn isn't a friend of mine," Percy answered, with unpleasant frankness. "I shouldn't know what to do with him."

"I thought you said he was your brother's greatest chum," said Kitty, sharply, while Baby stood beside Percy looking over his hand, apparently more interested in the cards than the conversation.

He was flattered, for being three years Tom's junior, he generally came in for a minimum share of attention from the pretty cadette.

Claude Mostyn drew Kitty into the verandah again, his face very unhappy.

"I cannot think," he said, as his adored obeyed the gesture, "why you should take such an interest in this Mr. Gore's looks, or Mr. Ley—Leighton—what's his name's money. Surely, Kitty, they can be of no interest to *you*."

"And why not? Claude, you are treading on my flounce. Why should not Mr. Gore or Mr. Leyburn interest me as much as any other visitor to the place?"

"Any other *male* visitor, you mean. Do you think, Kitty, I have not observed how indifferent you are to the members of your own sex?"

"I don't know what you have or have not observed, Claude. Perhaps, if you carried precept into practice, and confined all observations to your own sex, it might be as well."

"That is unkind, Kitty. I only spoke because I thought that you and I stood in a different relation to one another from the rest of the world."

"And were to have no acquaintances in the world?"

"I never said that, Kitty. You misconstrue me. What I mean is, that you do not even know whether either of these

young men is a fit acquaintance for you to make."

"So long as they are pleasant, gentlemanly, and not addicted to bullying, I'm sure I should be satisfied."

"I hope, Kitty," cried the young vicar, much hurt, "that you would not give either of them the right to *bully* you, as you call it."

"As to that," returned Kitty, tossing her beautiful head relentlessly, "I fail to see your right in the matter. I never gave it you."

The waters were rising to boiling pitch.

Mr. Mostyn stopped short, and put his hands to his head with an excited gesture.

"I think I had better go away," he said, desperately. "I was a fool ever to come, or—or to fancy that you cared for me. Good night, Miss Kate Delamayne. Forgive my *bullying*, and make what acquaintances you please. I shall never trouble you again."

"Good night, Mr. Mostyn," said Kitty, with the sweetest little Trevoil smile imaginable, and extended hand.

He did not touch it, only turned from her with a white look of wrath; and snatching up his hat, bade good night to the rest of the family in a nervous, agitated manner, which showed them all that something was amiss. Maude pressed him kindly to remain. Perhaps she thought if Kitty had lost the game, she might step in and win it; but Mr. Mostyn was obdurate, and went off, hurrying down the garden walks till his course was suddenly stayed by the appearance of a nymph in white muslin, with a scarlet, musky-scented rose in her bosom, standing beside the gate, and holding out a slim, white hand for his acceptance.

"You are not going without shaking hands with me, Claude?" she said, softly; "when we have been friends so long, too; and I have come out to open the gate for you!"

"Kitty!" cried the vicar, miserably, "why on earth do you torture me thus? Have you no womanly feeling—no heart at all?"

"Heart, Claude? No, not *now*. Did not you ask me for it?"

The last words in the shyest of whispers, coupled with one upward glance from the light blue eyes, which spoke volumes of tender reproach.

Mr. Mostyn was but man. He hauled

down his flag, and capitulated at discretion.

"Kitty, my darling, can you forgive me? What a jealous, irritable fool I am! Oh, Kitty, tell me again that your dear heart is mine still—mine for ever!"

And then, of course, followed a reconciliation, in which Kitty bore her part with the grace which might be expected from one who was no novice in such scenes; and during which the scarlet rose got sadly mauled, presenting, indeed, little beside a mangled stalk by the time that Mr. Mostyn took his departure.

Next day, Miss Kitty Delamayne bullied the bashfully unwilling Percy till she drove him into St. Leonard's after study hours to call on Jack Leyburn.

We may as well allow women to have the last word. If not, they are pretty sure to have the last action.

CHAPTER XVIII.

"MY FRIEND, THE BROTHER OF MY LOVE."

AS may have been seen, Miss Kate Delamayne was a young lady not easily turned from anything on which she had once set her mind. Her perseverance in this case, however, met with but poor success. Percy White did indeed call on Mr. Leyburn; but to his great satisfaction found that gentleman "not at home;" and not possessing the mature dignity of a card, contented himself with entrusting his name to the precarious memory of a porter, and returned to his employer in a high state of innocent glee at his failure.

She controlled her feelings, and told him, with fairly disguised anger glittering in her pretty eyes, that he must call again in a day or so, "since he hadn't left a card."

"Haven't got any," replied Percy, flicking his legs cheerfully with a slender black reed—by courtesy a cane; but which, even if devoted to the serviceable purpose of "welt raising," was hardly strong enough to produce more than one very feeble plant of that interesting order. Perhaps botany, even as connected with the grafting of welts on palms, was not interesting to Master White. Kitty, on the contrary, looked at him with decided botanical fervour, and answered shortly—

"I will write your name and address on some blank ones. It looks so absurdly childish not to have a card—so ungentelemanly, too."

"All right," said Percy, turning the attentions of his cane to the nearest pieces of furniture in lieu of his legs. "But I don't know what use they'll be to me, Miss Kate."

"To leave on your brother's friend, you little stupid. How else can he come and see you?"

"Oh, lord!" cried Percy, cracking the cane behind his back, "I hope he won't. I don't know how to talk to people."

"We might assist your conversational powers," quoth Kitty, with a little sneer, which Master Percy was not keen enough to perceive.

He looked up reassuringly.

"Oh, I forgot. There isn't much fear of his turning up, after all. The porter told me they all left to-morrow morning early. That's all right. Ho! I'm so glad," and he departed, whistling, "I'm such a bashful man," and flicking his legs till Kitty could have shaken him within an inch of his life.

And yet her hopes had not been groundless. The Gores, indeed, left on the morrow—a week earlier than they had intended; but Jack Leyburn remained behind.

I am going to tell you why.

About an hour previous to Percy's futile call, Lady Gore received a telegram from Scotland containing these words—

"Sir Henry Gore, Strathgyle Lodge, Ayrshire, to Lady Gore, Queen's Hotel, Hastings.—Taken very bad with one of the old attacks. Join me with Clifton at your earliest convenience."

Needless to say, Lady Gore was thrown into a terrible state of anxiety at once. At the mildest showing, Sir Henry had been a careless, if not actually unfaithful husband—carelessness which in late years had degenerated into easy indifference; but as it is a well-known fact that the best-loved husbands have often been the least deserving, and that no ill-treatment can kill some women's affection "for the men whose name they bear," so Lady Gore continued to worship the member for Homeshire with true wifely fidelity, and, despite the ill-health which made Scottish air too keen for her, would gladly have accompanied her husband to the shooting lodge which he rented in conjunction with Lord Amberley, had he not himself suggested that she should go to St. Leonard's instead.

"You see, I've settled to go to Strathgyle with Amberley," Sir Henry observed, in the

light, easy mannner which Clifton had inherited from him. "Perhaps another fellow may come too; so I had better write you to meet me in London on the day we go to the Ponsonbys'. You were comfortable at the Queen's last year, weren't you? And I suppose Clifton will join you on his return from the Continent."

"Of course he will," Lady Gore answered, quietly. As if it were likely her darling would let her remain alone at the seaside when he was in England! The love between this mother and son was wonderful. Indeed, to my thinking, Lady Gore had invested her boy with all that idolatry of affection which Sir Henry no longer cared to invite on his own behoof. "Quand on n'a pas ce qu'on aime, il faut aimer ce qu'on a."

On receipt of this telegram, however, the wife's conjugal solicitude rose at once to ferment pitch. Some years ago, Sir Henry had been subject to these attacks; which, though not immediately dangerous, had been attended with sufficient risk to make his family dread their recurrence; and Lady Gore no sooner heard that this was a bad one of the sort than she became wild to set off at once.

"Couldn't we go to-night, Clif? I should like to start immediately, dear," she kept saying, as she moved about the room in a nervous, restless way, busying herself with collecting some of their little ornaments and knick-knacks together. Clifton put his arms round her, and pressed her gently into her arm-chair.

"Now, mother darling, you sit down and be good. It's no use thinking of going to-night. Even if you managed—which you couldn't—to reach London in time to catch the night mail for Scotland, you would be dead before you got to Strathgyle. No, no, just you trust to me, and we will start by the eight o'clock train to-morrow morning. It's no use going before; and you'll have had your night's rest by then."

Lady Gore smiled at the idea of rest.

"He may be very ill, dear. I shall be far too anxious to sleep."

"Then you will be very wrong, little mother, when you know that in all probability he'll be all right again by the time you get there."

"Ah, you have never seen him in one of these attacks, Clif."

"I've seen him the day after, and he

looked as right as a trivet. By the way, mother, can you tell me—purely as an educational question, you know—why trivets are always right, and whether there is no possibility of their ever being wrong?"

Lady Gore smiled, which was exactly what Clifton wanted, for he immediately rewarded her with a kiss.

"Now you look pretty, mother mine. I don't like you at all when you frown. Indeed, I think if you were always to wear a wrinkled brow, like poor old Miss Leyburn, I should begin to fall in love with some one else."

"Silly boy. When are you not in love? I hope my little friend Enid has not inherited her aunt's frown."

"Enid!" Clifton almost shouted, his face flushing scarlet at the idea. "Of course not. Why she is as different as—as light from darkness, and—— Hallo, here's Jack the Giant!"

Jack came in fresh from a bath, his head still damp, and his whole person so redolent of sunshine and salt water that Clifton informed him that it was as good as a dip in the briny to look at him.

"A sort of homœopathic plunge, you know."

Lady Gore's countenance fell. She had, indeed, forgotten their guest's existence; and now, calling him to her, began to tell him in a pretty apologetic way of the sudden need for their departure; and to express her great regret that, being so serious a matter as illness, it must necessarily deprive her of the remainder of Jack's visit.

"And we were enjoying ourselves together so much, were we not?" she said, wistfully. "I had quite counted on coaxing you to stay over the fortnight; and now you can't think how disappointed I am, Jack. As for Clifton, I feel positively guilty at having to carry him off to look after the old woman, and so rob him also of his friend. He will pretend to forgive me; but," shaking her head with a little graceful movement, "I doubt he'll be thinking all the time that the mother might have managed with her maid. You must promise me, Jack, to let us see a great deal of you when we are at Erdley in February."

How much there is in a pretty manner! Make as little as you like of small courtesies, they will always obtain their full value even in this rough-and-ready, shouldering age. A few words said in a simple, graceful way

—what were they? And yet they had entirely relieved Jack from the possible idea that his presence as a guest had not been taken into full consideration; and had deeply gratified him into the bargain, with the belief that the Gores would feel the parting from him as much if not more than himself.

And yet Lady Gore had in truth forgotten him wholly and entirely until his entrance into the room made her shiver with the idea that here was another complication which might possibly delay her departure in the morning.

How horribly insincere!

Not at all, my dear madam. Why should there be any insincerity in the matter? Every word that Lady Gore said was true. If it was also true that she was thinking far more of her husband's illness, and of her desire to get away from him, than of any pleasure that her guest's visit had occasioned her, what earthly necessity was there for telling him so, or for making him uncomfortable by harping on her anxiety to start, or her fear lest anything should delay them?

To some people—a few—it comes as natural to say the right thing at the right moment, and avoid saying the wrong thing at the wrong moment, as it does to the generality to act on the reverse method; and the majority revenge themselves on the, in consequence, too popular few by calling them—insincere.

Quite a mistake, my worthy friends. The people you condemn are, in fact—and whether intentionally or not—carrying out the Bible precept, which not only says “be courteous,” but when extolling charity as the greatest of all virtues, singles out courtesy as one of its particular characteristics. The truth is, your very sincere people are apt to be rather one-sided in their ultra-morality; as, for instance, you will often hear them informing a poor relative that her bonnet or gown is hideous, unbecoming, and in bad style—

“Not that I should like to hurt your feelings, you know, dear; but one *must* be honest before all, and in my opinion your bonnet is, &c.”

Or else they will observe to some one else—

“Have you seen Mrs. B.'s baby? She is so ridiculously proud of the poor little thing, and really you never saw such an object. I felt quite sorry to pain her; but

one *must* speak the truth. You know my motto, sincerity above everything; and I felt obliged to tell her that in my opinion the child's nose was crooked, and that it had a decided shade of red in its hair.”

Ah, me! the temptation I always feel to address these Christians with—

“And pray what necessity had you for making an observation which you knew would give pain? Mrs. A.'s bonnet may be ugly; but the face inside it is charming, and so is the pretty mantle which covers the ill-made gown. Why didn't your love of candour oblige you to remark on either of these facts? Dislike to pay compliments! Fear of making a fellow-creature vain? Rubbish and humbug, madam! Your baby squints; and Mrs. B.'s has the loveliest blue eyes imaginable. Why didn't the obligation of ‘sincerity above all’ lead you to please her by observing on a fact patent to all, instead of pointing out one which she might never have seen? Not necessary! Then why say anything? Is it less necessary to avoid giving pain, than paying compliments?”

Go to, go to, ye whited Pharisees! In nine cases out of ten, sincerity is only another word for ill-breeding, and truth for temper.

I would to God that things were oftener called by their right names in this world!

Jack at once declared that he wouldn't have had Clifton stay for the world. He wouldn't have stayed for the best friend living—not even for Clif—at which that young gentleman made him a low and mocking bow—if his old governor was ill and wanted him. Could he help to pack; or might he go and get the tickets for them?

Lady Gore thanked him, and said her maid could do the packing. If he and Clifton liked to go and take the tickets, she would be very grateful. They were dear, willing fellows; but they must not tire themselves out in her service. Suppose they went for a walk before tea, and took the tickets en route? She did not add that she was longing to get rid of them for a little while, that she might have a regular woman's cry over the telegram, that mute witness to her husband's suffering. Again, you see—insincere!

Jack and Clifton set off at a long, swinging trot, which soon carried them past the Cross and up the narrower streets towards the railway station; whence, having taken the tickets and despatched an answering tele-

gram to Sir Henry, informing him of the time at which he might expect his family, they started off for a walk past the Castle, and over the east hill.

"Our last march, old fellow," Clifton said, quite sorrowfully. "What a horrid bore it is!"

"Perhaps you will find him better," replied Jack, consolingly.

"Him? Oh, yes, I dare say."

Clifton was not thinking of Sir Henry but of Jack; and meeting the latter's inquiring look, burst out frankly—

"You're setting me down as awfully unfeeling, old fellow; but the governor has had these takings before, and they're not dangerous. I'm sorry for him, of course; but I'm a deal more sorry for the little mother. He will be all right to-morrow evening, I dare say; but the hurried journey and agitation are sure to lay her up for a week. She's not strong enough for worries of any sort."

"It was selfish for Sir Henry to send for her, then," said Jack, in his downright way. "That is, if his illness is really nothing."

"Oh, it's everything to her, you know. He does suffer, and then—she loves him."

"I say, Clif," Jack broke in, not overpolitely, "you mayn't mean it, but you talk as if you didn't care. I'm not a sentimental fellow myself, but if my governor were ill——"

"I know, Jack, I know," Clifton answered, gravely, and with the sweet look in his eyes which always disarmed his mentors. "I think one of the jolliest things about your place is the way you and your father hang together. He's got the name of being no end of a Tartar, but I vow he's more like a real good friend than a 'stern parient' with you."

"So he is," said Jack, his honest red face broadening into a complacent grin. "He's a brick, is my old governor; and I don't mind telling you, Clif, it sometimes goes against me the way in which you fight shy of yours."

"He fights shy of me," Clifton answered, with an involuntary sigh at the difference between his feeling towards his father and Jack's. "But I know what you mean; and you're right, old chap. Sir Henry and I don't fit. I wish we did. I'd give a great deal to be as easy and pleasant with him as you are with Mr. Leyburn."

"Why the deuce can't you, then?" asked Jack.

"Because he won't let me, and never would. I'm not a son to him—only an heir and a reminder to people that he isn't as young as he used to be—two things which require two lines of duty from me. First, that I shall live within my allowance, and marry a woman of suitable rank and fortune—money's indispensable, Jack; for Sir Henry don't want to spare more than he can help, and won't let me earn a living for myself. And secondly, that I shall not trouble him with my company in the society where he plays the young man still. There, that's the way of it. Besides"—Clifton paused a moment, and the mellow voice grew graver still—"I wouldn't say it to any one but you, but the fact is he don't treat the mother properly, and I can't stand it. Oh, I don't mean that he beats her, or anything of that sort; but he hurts her dear, loving heart just as much by—I say, though, she wouldn't like me to be talking this way."

"Then shut up," said Jack, decidedly.

"You're right, I will."

And the two friends, who understood each other so well, walked on arm-in-arm in silence. They were nearing the crest of the hill now, and over the rounded swell of the sea came sweeping a cool, soft breeze, lifting the hair off their flushed faces, and rumpling the long ridges of purple heather and honey-scented furze which flushed the downward slopes of hill and dale, merging in the dusky foliage of the wooded valley below. Above, the sky was all gold and crimson, with here and there on the western horizon a vivid streak of scarlet flame. Even the waves were stained a ruddy violet, and over the town and valley hung a white, pearly haze like a bridal veil, sign of the past sultriness of the day. Jack spoke first, as if in consolation.

"After all, we are equal. You've your mother, and I've the governor. *You've* no call to complain, Clif. I only wish the river air agreed with her, that she might live more at Erdley. It would be jolly for Enid to have your mother for a friend."

"It is not her health so much as that Sir Henry dislikes the Hall," said Clifton. "She wants—that is, if Enid will—to ask her to stay with us in the spring. She was always very fond of your sister, you know, Jack; and—and"—Clifton's face was un-

usually red during this speech—"the mother isn't one to take a fancy to every girl."

"Unlike her son, then," said Jack, brutally.

"That is different altogether. Any one who had ever known your sister well couldn't help—I say, Jack, what a lucky fellow you are! I don't suppose there's another man in England with quite such a girl in his house, so bright and yet so—so good."

This was plain speaking enough when taken in conjunction with Clifton's sparkling eyes and earnest manner; but nothing could be more unconscious than Jack's matter-of-fact—

"Enid? Oh, yes, she's a very good sort of girl. I'm glad you got on well with her; but oh, she always good-tempered with every one. I will say that for her."

This was not flattering to Clifton, who had rather tried to fancy that his good treatment was exceptional. Unlike Merle, however, small mortifications never ruffled the sweetness of this young fellow's temper; and when he next spoke his voice was as good-humoured as ever.

"I say Jack, give a dog his due. We are saying good-bye to-morrow. Now, *have* you had to row me about a single spoon since we've been here?"

"N-no, I don't think I have," said Jack, deliberately. "Let me see—we have been here a week. Hem!"

"Oh, you needn't chaff, old fellow. It would have been all the same if it had been ten. 'Pon my honour, Jack," and Clifton meant it, "I am going to turn over a new leaf, and copy you."

"Are you?" said Jack, sceptically; and Clifton's leadings towards a confidence were chilled.

"After all, it's better not to speak too soon," he thought. "Jack's right. What's a week? Why, a year's probation wouldn't make me half worthy of her. Such a rattled fellow as I am. Heigho! I wonder if she could ever care about me. We could live at the Hall all the year round, except a couple of months in the season. I *should* like to show her a London season, the beautiful darling. Fancy riding along the Row at her side! There's many a man would envy me. And yet I'd rather see her sweet face at home—all one's own—as none of those hackneyed girls one meets everywhere in Belgravia could ever be—with her dear,

honest eyes— Hallo! Jack!—for God's sake, take care!"

Any one who has ever walked across the cliffs between Hastings and Fairlight must remember what a gashed and broken appearance they present in many places: huge fragments of earth and rock lying on the beach where they have fallen from the giddy heights above; while black boards, erected every here and there along the summit of the cliffs, warn incautious wayfarers against approaching too near to the edge of the crumbling soil, which, if viewed from below, looks in many places as if it only needed a touch to send down fresh avalanches on the beach, already rendered almost impassable in some parts by the masses which have fallen from time to time.

This dilapidation of Nature is inconvenient at all times. It went further, and almost put the Leyburn envelopes into mourning borders—*i.e.*:

Clifton, wrapt in his lover's musings, lingered behind.

Jack, in love with the sea, pressed forward.

Of course he didn't look at the board, though one stood staring at him within half a dozen yards. Instead, he planted his great, heavy weight on a point of sandy turf, already almost separated from the cliff by a gaping crack nearly two feet deep; and sticking his hands in his pockets, grinned delightedly at the purple waves below. The crack slowly opened its mouth, and grinned anxiously at him. Clifton saw the danger—uttered a frantic shout, and, springing forward, grasped Jack by the shoulders, dragging him backwards; whereupon Mr. Leyburn, disturbed from his amorous enjoyment by a sudden tremble under his feet and an unmannerly clutch at the back of his neck, swung round on his heel, and, shooting out a big fist like a knuckle of beef, knocked his assailant down. The crack grinned once more—a ghastly, derisive smile—and disappeared amid a great rumble and clatter, which extended all down the side of the cliff, and ended in a sullen thud upon the shingle below.

Voilà tout!

Clifton had saved Jack's life, and Jack had knocked him down for it. Such is the way of the world. But now the scene changed. Jack, standing within half a yard of the gulf beneath, and awakening to the

knowledge that Life and Death had just struggled for him, and that Life had won, began to tremble and look pale. Clifton, staggering on to his feet, his clothes covered with dust, and the yellow curls blowing about his hatless head, burst into uncontrollable peals of laughter, which only redoubled in mirth at the sight of Jack's awe-struck face.

A stranger passing by would have wondered what on earth these two young men had been up to.

And the purple waves rippled and laughed below, and rushed up in little shining rings to see what new present the generous cliffs had flung them from above. Little would they have cared if that present had been a human body.

THE CASUAL OBSERVER.

UP EARLY ON PURPOSE.

CORKSCREW staircases of stone, corkscrew staircases of iron, darkness and dust, beam and rafter, break-neck ladders, a tight squeeze between iron bars, another climb, and I was in a sort of barred cage, with the wind rushing furiously in my face, and the strange construction of iron and copper seeming to vibrate. Another climb of three or four feet, and my head was in darkness. I was in the great gilded ball of St. Paul's, and peering up higher still into the cross.

But I had come thus far to see London awaking from its slumbers; so, descending a foot or two, I was once more in the cage, some three feet in diameter, formed of the uprights which support the golden ornament of the cathedral, and looking east, west, north, and south of the Great City.

My first sensation was one of tremor. Was the structure safe? The next that of wonder, as my eye strove to pierce the distance, and to analyze the vast panorama spread around. It was some minutes before anything but a confused mass of clouds and buildings was visible; then starting out as it were, one by one, familiar objects, presenting an unfamiliar aspect, appeared. Away on the north a long line of heights—Highgate and Hampstead. On the south, gloomy and cold-looking, another range, and plainly showing what appeared to be an old-fashioned tea caddy between a couple of tall candlesticks, till a glint of sunshine showed the glassy structure of the Sydenham Palace.

Eastward, a forest of ships. Westward, the clock tower of Westminster, the Abbey, and St. Thomas's Hospital; while, as if to join these latter points of the compass, there was a wavy, mud-brown path, till, following it to my feet, it glimmered dimly as the bridge-spanned river.

I thought I had chosen a clear morning and an early hour, so as to see London before the smoke should obscure the prospect. Vain thought! Look where I would there was smoke rising; here as from some vast conflagration; there passing down in dense clouds before the morning breeze—rushing down into the streets, and eddying in currents, to rise up again a few hundred yards farther on. Far from being swept away, the grimy vapour circled round and round, floating in banks of cumulus shape, and settling among the taller buildings of the City.

Now there was a patch of blue sky and a burst of sunshine, but far below lay the smoke clouds, ever changing and altering the architectural landscape spread below the gilded crow's nest where I clung.

Gazing west, and trying to trace the path of the Thanksgiving Procession, the irregular street was visible, and recognizing familiar objects, I noted St. Bride's, St. Dunstan's, the Law Buildings by Fetterlane; and then, in an instant of time, they were blotted out by a curtain of smoke, which rolled and revolved, giving a glimpse of spire, and then gradually hiding it again, as the vapour seemed, with its next bound, to fill up the channel of the Thames, hiding the brown ribbon by the river-side, which not long before, I had made out to be the Embankment.

The cloud had lifted though a little to my right, and there was a drab path, wide, apparently, as a sheet of note-paper—the Viaduct; close by it the grey pile of Christ's Hospital and the four domes of the Meat-market, with the square, squat tower of St. Bartholomew's. And now for the first time came a puff of smoke, swept up by an eddy as high as where I clung. It stayed but a moment, but its odour was unmistakable, and then it was hurrying over the grey lead-covered roof of the Cathedral far below my feet.

Again, looking east—looking, in fact, wherever the curtain lifted—there was the shaving-brush-topped Monument, and a faint peep at the White Tower seen by the

masts in the Pool. Farther east, too, there was once a dim shadowing forth of the Kentish Hills—Greenwich way—but only for an instant; then all was smoke once more, rolling heavily about the houses, as one by one, in every direction, chimney after chimney began to vomit forth its contribution to the cloudy pall, which momentarily grew thicker and blacker.

There is the stump of St. George's Cathedral and the dome of Bethlehem. Nearer still to the left, square St. Saviour's, and egg-topped Borough Market. Bridges, too, with flies, apparently—only they are waggons—crawling over them; and now comes up a dull, loud roar, as of awakening life; yet for awhile it is but faint. Another break in the smoky cloud as it rolls aside, and this time there is a long, round-backed something, out of which a white ostrich feather seems to glide, and then develop into an early train from Cannon-street, crossing the river to London Bridge Station. An instant more, and the curtain falls to hide it away.

Where will the cloud lift next? For awhile all below on every side is misty and blurred; but the white stone of the book trade buildings in Newgate Market shows itself; so does the great pile in St. Martin's-le-Grand.

Bow Church starts out suddenly now, like a grey spectre holding its watch down close to its side; and beyond, there is a muddle of little toy houses which must be the Bank, the Mansion House, and Exchange. There is a gap, too, marking the course of the new street leading to the Embankment; and then the eye is taken by what looks like a general attempt upon the part of the myriads of chimney-pots, aiming to form each for itself a cloudy canopy, till tons of soot must be floating in the air, and, in spite of eddyings, and curlings, and returnings, the whole vast cloud settles slowly in a great drift over towards Kent.

The noise now increases fast, rising and falling, till there is a roar from the street. Red vans and carts have given place to others of indescribable hue, the patter of horses' feet rises with a clear metallic sound heard above the roar, and in the nearer streets a stream of passengers can be seen hurrying along.

One more glance round from my lofty eyrie, and I see close below portions of the grey cathedral; slate and tile roof in ridge

and furrow; faint markings which show where there is street or lane; and then all beyond smoke—smoke—smoke, a dense, ever-rolling canopy of smoke, apparently a hundred feet in thickness; for up here all is clear and bright, as it is below, when I reach the now thronged streets of the awakened City.

AUSTIN CHASUBLE'S LOVE CHANCE.

IN TWO CHAPTERS.—II.

IT was not long before I saw Juliet again.

In fact, our visiting routes appeared to coincide, for we were continually meeting, now in one house and now in another, and I cannot say that I was always edified by the words which fell from my fair acquaintance's lips on these occasions. She had a way of riding roughshod over anything which had the slightest approach to what she called "cant," and which were generally the pious sentences of resignation which many of my parishioners were at trouble to bring forth for my approval. She once spoke of Job as a "person of most unfortunately dirty habits;" and hoped that an old crossing-sweeper, with whom we were both acquainted, and who had Mrs. Bosely's objection to baths, both Turkish and otherwise, would not end by getting into the patriarch's condition. She read the Bible in as lively a tone as if it were a novel, and spoke of St. John's epistles as "jolly"!

Once I felt obliged to remonstrate with her, took the book into my own hands, and put it away. She stared at me with a lovely rising blush, and as we went downstairs said—

"Mr. Chasuble, did I offend you to-day?"

"Offend me? No."

"Then why—"

"I am afraid of your offending these people's principles by such expressions. Please don't be offended"—and indeed I was colouring violently—"but remember they do not know what you mean as well as I do. You would not like your heedless tongue to harm other people's souls, I am sure."

"Of course not; but— Who would mind what I say?"

"Everybody who knows and likes you as I—as you deserve to be liked."

When I got out into the street I felt hot

and breathless. What had I been on the point of saying? Nothing very dreadful; and yet I was thankful from the bottom of my heart that I had checked myself before saying it, and betraying—what?

Before I went to bed that night I was in love—in love with an irreverent little girl, with blue eyes and a dimpled cheek; and after this I became very unhappy. I loved, and yet I quarrelled with my love, rebuked it, turned away from it; and then, like a weak, inconsistent fool, took it in my arms and hugged it. Of course this latter proceeding was utter madness; for what had I, Austin Chasuble, in common with this wilful, impetuous, richly robed damsel? I did not even know her name, rank, or anything but that her manners were those of a lady, her dress that of one reared in the lap of luxury; and I did know, only too well, that I received a bare hundred a year as curate of St. Stephen's, and an additional fifty from my mother, the widow of the late very Rev. Dean of Bibchester, and still living with my sisters in a cosy house within the Cathedral close of that town. Now, stretch a hundred and fifty pounds as far as you may, I defy you to make it keep one person in luxury, let alone two. It might keep two, with painful economy, in some remote country parts; but in London! And then two so seldom remain two, and so often multiply themselves indefinitely.

What could I do?

The girl had fairly bewitched me; yet, like a madman, instead of avoiding her society, I sought it. I found out the days she visited the poor; and not only devoted those to the same errand, but almost every other as well, lest I might by accident miss one chance of seeing her. Surcingle, the junior curate, said I left him nothing to do outside the church. He was perfectly correct in his statement.

Would I not have walked myself to death rather than let him incur the danger of meeting my bonny Juliet in the West-end slums? By degrees I grew thin and haggard, between combating with my love passion and trying to devise means for satisfying it—so haggard, indeed, that sometimes the bright eyes would look at me compassionately, and she would say—

“Mr. Chasuble, you look awfully ill. I don't believe you give yourself half enough food or rest. You ought to lay up, and have some one to look after you.”

Ah! how gladly would I have laid up if I had had her to look after me: to look in once a week or so, as she did on Mrs. Gridlan, and ask me how I did, with that frank, inspiring smile of hers.

Alas! when my ailment was comprised within the simple fact of my love for herself, how could her presence but aggravate instead of curing the evil?

Another time she hurt me cruelly by saying, as I was opening her umbrella for her—

“One thing I like so much in you Ritualistic clergymen, Mr. Chasuble, is your not marrying. It makes you so much more useful among the poor. You couldn't give all your time to them, as you do, if you had an exigeante wife at home; and I always thought it one of the great advantages the Roman clergy possessed over ours.”

It was like a knife through my heart that she should say this, and be glad of it; and with difficulty I commanded myself enough to reply—

“Celibacy, certainly, has its recommendations in some cases; but you must remember, Miss Juliet, it is wholly voluntary with us, not enforced as with the Roman priesthood.”

“Then it is all the more right and sensible of you,” she answered, warmly; and, shaking my hand, departed.

That night I felt desperately unhappy. It was perfectly true that hitherto I had regarded celibacy as my particular vocation; had extolled the benefits, mundane and spiritual, of that state; and enlarged, both at home and abroad, on the drawbacks and general inferiority of a married clergy. Indeed, if I ever condescended to admit any dreams in which woman took a part, she always appeared as a pale, spiritual creature, with lofty brow, deep violet eyes, and palely-golden hair banded Madonna-wise on either side of her transparent temples—some “rare, pale Margaret,” or heavenly-minded Hilda, whose heart being already enclosed within the sacred atmosphere of the Church, might make a worthy helpmate to one of the pastors of that establishment.

Such was my ideal—an ideal on which I had more than once expounded in eloquent gravity to my admiring mother and sisters in the cathedral close at Bibchester, and to which I had in my college days inscribed various sonnets of varying excellence—sonnets in which the heroine's slight, pale fingers, inspired glance, and lily-like com-

plexion appeared on every page. And now, behold me!—"fallen, fallen, fallen from my high estate," and hungering mightily for a very flesh and blood damsel with saucy eyes and ripe lips—a damsel without a trace of either heavenliness, ill-health, or inspiration about her—a girl of the period, who talked enjoyingly of "delicious whitebait lunches at Greenwich," told her poor protégées that she looked pale of course because she had been dancing till morning at "such a jolly ball," and insisted, with honest deprecation of a higher motive, that she only visited the poor because it was "fun."

"One gets so awfully tired of rich, haw-haw, sleekly proper people, you know, Mr. Chasuble. They do get frightfully slow after a time; and so I come down among the slums now and then for a fillip, just as gourmands take a pill or a glass of bitters before dinner."

I remonstrated warmly against this. Fain, indeed, would I have made myself consistent by making an angel out of her; but she set down her foot, and would not have it at any price; so, as I might not love a saint, I e'en lay down in the dust and worshipped a sinner. Aye, good heavens, how I worshipped her! and I did not even know her name!

One day I betrayed myself.

She had mentioned on one occasion that she always went to see Mrs. Bosely on a Friday. I went to see Mrs. Bosely on a Friday also. Fasting days are, I consider, peculiarly adapted to works of charity; and accordingly we encountered each other one afternoon at the entrance of Jinks'-alley, just as it was coming on to rain.

"Barely in time for shelter," she said, without stopping; and I only lifted my hat smilingly in return, and hurried on to get the dame's door open. She came scudding in after me, laughing and shaking the rain-drops off her skirts; and I had taken the umbrella from her before either of us noticed that the room was empty save of ourselves. Mrs. Bosely had gone out; and as our baffled eyes met each other in their return from the vain search, there must have been something ludicrous in the situation, for we both laughed.

"It seems we have come on the same errand," I said, colouring consciously.

"It seems we are always coming on the same errand," she retorted. "I was just thinking to-day that I never come to see

my old people without finding you too, Mr. Chasuble; but I hardly calculated on finding only you."

"You forget they are my people also," I said, vexed with myself for reddening still more under her words—"if not more so than yours. It is my business to look after them."

"Your business and my pleasure. Well, both combined bring us together pretty often."

"Not so often as to be unpleasant to you, I hope," I said—as anxiously, poor fool, as if my life hung on the answer.

"Certainly not, Mr. Chasuble—I rather like it, though you do scold me about Job, and trample on all my little pet weaknesses."

"Not very hardly, I think, Miss Juliet—I hope not, at least."

"I don't know," she answered, giving her head a little wilful shake as she stood drying the soles of her boots at the small fire. "However, I am resigning myself to being trampled on to-day, for I must wait till the rain is over, and I want to wait till Mrs. Bosely comes in. I shouldn't like to go away without bidding the ridiculous old thing good-bye."

"Good-bye!" I repeated, vaguely. Some of the rain must have run down my back just then—such a cold shiver ran through me. "You are not—surely you are not going away!"

She looked up, her blue eyes wide with surprise. My tone must have sounded of the despair I felt.

"Indeed I am. Don't think I'm tired of my ragged friends; but I leave London next week, and I shall be too busy to come down to them again; so you will have them all to yourself in the future."

I felt I was growing white as death. I could not speak or look at her.

"I am afraid you are rather glad," she said, brushing the dried mud stain off her boot with one of Mrs. Bosely's dusters. "But I haven't corrupted your flock very much. I think I say worse things when you are there than when I'm alone."

Still no answer. The words would not come.

"I know I did say, 'The nearer the church the farther from God,' when Mrs. Gridlan said so long as she could hear St. Stephen's bells and see you she wouldn't repine at not going to church," the girl went

on, with a sort of mirthful penitence; "and I burst out laughing when that fat old Mrs. Ball told me she felt like a 'sparrow on a 'ousetop.' But it is so difficult not to laugh, isn't it? And how does a sparrow on a housetop feel?"

Some one felt lonelier than any sparrow on a housetop just then, and found it rather difficult not to burst out crying into the bargain.

"You will have to forgive me, now I am going," she said, drying the other sole with great care. "I feel quite sorry you are not going away somewhere, too. You must want a holiday."

A holiday when my work was connected with her!

"Are you going for long, Miss Juliet?" I asked, rather hoarsely.

"Oh, I am going for good. At least, I am not coming back to live in London again."

"Not at all! Oh! Juliet, shall I never see you again?"

The words broke from me without any will of my own.

It was vain attempting to restrain them; and only when they were spoken I knew by the rush of colour to her face what I had done.

"Forgive me—do forgive me!" I stammered, brokenly. "I never meant—but it seemed so sudden. To lose you altogether! I cannot bear it. I——"

"Mr. Chasuble," she interrupted, blushing very much, but speaking in a kind, womanly tone, "surely you are not going to say anything foolish. If you are, pray stop."

"Is it foolish to love you?" I exclaimed, losing my head altogether.

And then, in the same moment, it rushed over me how utterly foolish—nay, insane—such love was; and I sat down by the rickety little table, and burying my face in my hands, groaned aloud at my own madness.

She came close to me, and said in her coaxing, pleasant voice—

"Mr. Chasuble, pray don't. Of course I forgive you. You did not mean anything. You are a little over-tired, that's all. Pray don't take it to heart."

Nothing could be more generous, more kindly ladylike; but I would not take the indulgence. Every tone of her liquid voice fanned my passion; and I burst out again, not looking at her.

"I did mean it. I do mean it. I love you, foolishly if you will, but with all my heart. How could you not see it? Why, it has been Heaven even to be near you, though I knew I could never win you—a poor curate, without even enough to keep himself. And you so fair, so——" I choked. I was fairly crying like a baby, with my face still hidden. "I know I ought not to tell you. I never meant to. It was enough to see you now and then; but if you go——"

"Poor fellow!" she said, as pitifully as if I had been Mrs. Ball's crippled grandson, and laying her little gloved hand on my bowed head. "I'm so sorry. I never guessed it, indeed. Of course it was very foolish; and how you could—but you'll soon get over it."

Her well-meant consolation only stabbed me more keenly. The rain fell in a constant "spit, spit" down the chimney on to the hot coals. A mangy hen sauntered into the room, and commenced pecking at my boot-heels. The wet from our two umbrellas trickled together in a little pool on the muddy floor.

"I would give my life to win you," I sobbed out, ashamed to lift my head; "and I cannot, I cannot."

"No, you can't," she said, firmly. Then after a moment, in which I did not speak, "I think I had better go away."

Another silence; then, in a softer tone—

"Don't cry. Please, please don't. I'm not worth it a bit, and I'm so sorry! Oh! you poor boy! I wish you wouldn't—I am so very, very sorry!"

The coaxing fingers glided from my head to the hands which covered my face. I felt their kindly clasp for a second; then a light, gentle touch, like the brush of a rose-leaf on my forehead, and—she was gone!

Before I could reach the door she was almost at the entrance of the alley, and I knew I had lost her.

I went home that day feeling like a man who has passed through Heaven, and lost it for ever. Only the touch on my forehead remained to save me from utter misery. If I had had one grain of common sense, I might have known that it was the seal of my condemnation, the surest sign that she did not and could not love me as I loved her, for one single moment; but I was mad—mad as only a man who loves vainly can be.

A telegram was lying on my lodging-

house table. I did not even notice it till evening, I was too wretched; but when the girl came in to lay the cloth she pointed it out to me, and I tore it open. It was from my mother, summoning me to Bibchester on important business. Of course I hurried off by the first train on the following day; and on my arrival was informed that the rector of Farleycombe—a pretty, rural village about three miles from Bibchester—was just dead; and my mother had prevailed with the patron, an old friend of her own, to offer me the living.

An income of six hundred a year mine in one day.

Of course I had to stay some days in Bibchester to settle matters. Nearly ten indeed had elapsed before I returned to town to bid adieu to St. Stephen's, and seek out Juliet. Yes, come what might, I had resolved to find her, and implore her to try and love me sufficiently to give up her gay London life, and share my own comfortable, if quiet home, among the green and sunny Kentish hopfields. Naturally, with this view, I went first to Mrs. Bosely.

"An' you be a-goin away too, sir!" cried the dame, when I told her the news. "Well, I never! Seems like as I'll be left all alone; an' myrheumatic's that bad mylegs is swollen right up, an' the perspiration runs off me in streams, it do, Yes, sir, I had to take they things off the door, they did make it so dratted 'eavy, an' stuff the air up so; and now Miss Julit's gone—God bless her—she won't take no offence."

"Then she is gone?" I asked, half expecting it, and making up my mind to follow her.

"Gone!—eh, yes, sir, all the way to Italy, she and her husban'; though whatsumdever they wants in that Popish place I can't imagine for the life o' me. Ah! she were a darling, she were. Just 'ee look at the piece o' cake she sent me. Aint it a big lump? An' there's her letter, which there's summut about you in it, for sure."

I only glanced at the wedge of iced and luscious cake; but I took the thick sheet of creamy paper, and read it steadily through. I was past emotion now.

"DEAR MRS. BOSELY," it said—"This is to bid you good-bye; for I am going to marry my cousin, Lord Danescourt. We have been engaged for more than a year, and now he won't wait any longer, but insists on

carrying me right away from London; so I am going, and shall not see you any more. Don't forget me, and mind to wish me joy over the cake and wine. Also bid Mr. Chasuble good-bye for me. I liked him very much.—Always your hearty friend,

"JULIET MANDEVILLE."

That was ten years ago, and I am unmarried still. I am more than ever convinced that celibacy is the only right and proper state for the priesthood, and make that condition a *sine qua non* with my curates. But I keep Juliet Mandeville's note hidden away in the depths of my desk; and the touch of her fresh lips has kept me from all others ever since. It may be she was the innocently cordial, pitiful child I fancy her. It may be she was only a careless coquette, amusing herself with an idle flirtation. I only know hers was the first girl-kiss that ever pressed my brow, and none has ever brushed it away.

LOST KEYS.

TEN shillings reward.—Lost, a bunch of keys. Whosoever will bring the same to the office of this paper, will receive the above reward."

It was very annoying, but there was no help for it. I had lost them, and awkward as it was, I could neither tell how nor where. The more I puzzled about it, the more confused I became. As a last resource, I sent off the advertisement to the paper, and sat down to think. "Lost keys"—how the words I had written reiterated themselves that evening as I mused in the twilight.

"Lost keys!" How many keys one loses in the course of a lifetime! Those early keys we never dreamt of losing—the keys that unlocked the sympathies and affections of school-day friends. How mysteriously they disappeared! There was a time when one could rely upon ward answering to ward, as night follows the day. No boyish trouble was so heavy but a glance at Harry could reveal it all, and lighten it in doing so. And the quick gleams of mutual joy when brighter scenes appeared, how prompt and full they were! Never shall I forget the unutterable fun and glee in my old chum's face when, at his instigation, I escaped from Old Dan, the ogre of the school, by bolting like an arrow 'twixt the straddling legs of the bewildered old man, as he came rolling to-

wards me with uplifted broom. Harry is living still—a few miles only separate us; but oh! the keys are lost, and how widely are our feelings, sympathies, and associations sundered! Imperceptibly the great whirlpool sucked us within its grasp; and now, though we meet or approach each other daily, we are as far apart as though John o' Groat's and Land's End were our respective homes.

True, other links are formed, other associations created; but again and so again, one by one the keys keep slipping from the bunch, and we constantly mourn over "lost keys."

The old familiar faces at the discussion class, how they come up before us as we muse! How strong and intimate those friendships were! Who ever forgets the cheery smile or boisterous applause that greeted his maiden attempt at oratory? But what has become of the friendly critic? Where is the grave face of the more discriminating hearer, who clipped our youthful wings with just but generous hand? There was Lucas, he who at twenty-five vowed eternal enmity to the weaker sex, and who, on hearing our eloquent tirade against the possibility of "The Mental Capacities of the Sexes" being proved equal, shook our hand with all the warmth and zeal of a compatriot. Slipped away and lost!—when last heard of, the happy father of eleven.

And Johnson, the fervid foe of alcohol, where is he? Alas for human weakness!—secretary of the "Long-called-for Hotel with Reasonable Charges and Decent Accommodation Company, Limited." Years since we heard from him, longer since we saw him.

And those tenderer, sweeter, though still shorter links!—the bright, bright eyes whose secrets we unlocked at will!

"Ah me! I mind me of a time that's gone."

How lasting and eternal were those vows! How firm and strong-abiding were to be those loves! Naught—naught but death was e'er to part us! What poetry we read, and wrote, and pestered the poor postman with. We had no quarrel—none, are good friends still, but the keys are lost. Charles meets Mary now, and no heart-burnings rise to see her calm and matronly demeanour amidst her young ones. Has not Charles his Lucy and a "graduated series" of their mutual miniatures at home?

But there are other keys we lose, and greater still their loss. Those happy days when faith unfluttering sat like ring-dove on her nest; when doubt and unfaith, with their gloomy follower unrest, ne'er passed the threshold of our soul. Who would not barter the best years of one's existence to recover those?—the days when thoughts of God and truth, and love and faith came in and out like sunbeams on a summer's day.

"I remember, I remember the fir trees tall and high,
I used to think their slender spires could almost reach the sky;
It was a childish ignorance, but now 'tis little joy
To think I'm farther off from Heaven than when I was a boy."

The key to moods and thoughts like these were worth the keeping, but they have gone. Not easy now the access to the pure, untrammelled thought of Him whose hidden wisdom is revealed to babes—the mystery of men.

Keys of sympathy with all the world of favourite authors, how they drop and fall! How passionately we adored Mr. B. till we heard that miserable narrative of his falsity and baseness! How we used to swear by K. till we were compelled to believe him mercenary and mean! Surely the beautiful philosophy and almost sacred teachings of E. are spared to us? Alas, he beats his wife, and is fast drinking himself to the grave!

A curse upon the mean and petty tattlers who shattered our ideals. And yet no need to curse, more cause to weep. One day we would have scorned to listen to the tales which now we greedily devour. Lost keys of simple faith and chivalrous belief, who shall restore you? who bring back the trustful, hoping heart of yore?

Then there are little keys we lose, whose absence we never notice till years after, when, called upon to use them, we seek in vain: such as the little sesames to school-boy knowledge—geography by rule, or astronomy in pages. How puzzled and offended with ourselves we feel, as we sit with would-be reflective faces, looking down on the youthful questioners at our feet! How vexed to find ourselves so woefully deficient, so unable to help the youngsters by giving the particular information required to get them out of a mess, and save them from that *bête noir* of schoolboys—a bad mark. To what mean tricks have we recourse, and

how anxious we are at once to preserve our dignity and gratify youthful inquiry. Time was when, driven in by dint of tasks and studies Herculean, we deemed it the one thing in the world utterly impossible, to make us ever forget where the Straits of Babel Mandeb lay. Did we not achieve promotion to the lowest place in the class on one occasion by loudly proclaiming them "at the bottom of the Red Sea"?—though the expression was but a literal description of their locale on the map suspended from the wall. And now how fretful and pettish you are obliged to be to prevent your youngest son from perceiving your inability to tell him the diameter of the globe. One always remembers the circumference, from the frequency with which we heard it compared to the rind of an orange, and the ardent desires we indulged to become possessed of a specimen of that favourite fruit, which should offer anything so tempting as 25,000 miles of succulency.

Lost keys! Why, their name is legion—like the sands on the shore, they are not to be numbered. Who shall tell of lost latch-keys, with the awful storms they called forth next morning; lost watch-keys, and the consequent loss of 'buses, trains, and business; lost keys of beer or wine cellars—only the cat always gets these; lost keys of jewellery—keys we find it convenient to have lost when visited by our richer friends; keys lost that once unlocked the secret store of home affection and domestic bliss? No, thank God, these are not lost; and whatsoever else we lose, if these be left, life is not drear and sad, but bright, and loving, and beautiful, and joyous, in spite of any number of lost keys.

THE GHOST IN THE SNOW.

CHAPTER VI.

CONCLUSION.

"AND you, *bonne mère*, have you known any one who has experienced evil or suffered injury through taking refuge in that deserted dwelling?" asked Markham.

"Ah! *m'sieu*, moi? Truly, not many," replied the old dame; "because, see you, *m'sieu*, people avoid the spot, and would rather risk exposure to the storm than seek shelter there."

"They're in the right of it, too," muttered the lieutenant. "I was an ensign during

the Crimean war, and was in the attack upon the Redan, and sharp work that was, I can tell you, and it left its mark upon me" (drawing up his sleeve and displaying a cicatriced wound on his left arm, which appeared as if it had nearly severed it just above the wrist). "But I swear I'd rather face twenty Redans, and assist in a *Balaclava* charge to boot, than pass a night alone in that infernal place. By George! I like to know that it's living flesh and blood that I'm opposed to. Though," he added, "I wouldn't mind making one of a party to go prepared for what might follow, and to endeavour to penetrate the mystery or level the cursed place to the ground."

The young officer spoke in English, and the old dame looked at me inquiringly, as though to ask me to explain what he had said. I translated the latter portion of his speech into French, and she raised her eyes to Heaven and crossed herself as she replied—

"The good God forbid! The young *m'sieu* knows not what he has said. Those who have refused to take warning, and have dared to return to the house again, have suffered for their rashness.

"I have said, *m'sieurs*, that I have not known many who have passed a night at the accursed spot. But long years ago there were many victims who suffered evil.

"When I was but a little child, I heard the old people tell many a terrible story of what they had known and seen, that made me afraid to sleep. As I have said, of late years the spot has been avoided; but, *m'sieurs*, many years ago, soon after I was married to the *bonhomme*, who is now in heaven, a young man of the name of Jacques Cartier Lemoine, who was about to be wedded to one of the prettiest and best maidens of the village—of pure French blood, *m'sieurs*—was benighted in a snow-storm, as were you, *m'sieurs*, the past night. He returned to the village next day, sad, pale, and dejected—he who was ever the gayest of the gay. He never told what he had seen, not even to *M'sieu le Prêtre*, nor to his sweetheart. He would not be questioned about it. But from that day he, who had never been sick a single hour since his childhood, pined away, and was afraid to be in the dark, or to be left alone a moment, even in the day-time. Three months later he died; and his sweetheart, who attended him to the last with the most loving care and tenderness,

took his death so much to heart that in another three months she likewise was a corpse! There are numbers of people still living who can recollect that sad affair.

"Eh bien, m'sieurs, one would think this was enough of evil; but Jacques Cartier had a cousin, named François Xavier,* who was greatly attached to him. François Xavier Lemoine was a fine handsome man, brave as a lion, who feared neither man nor demon. He was absent abroad when his cousin died, and did not return till ten years afterwards. When, however, he heard what had occurred to his cousin, he could not be persuaded otherwise than that some vile trick had been played upon him. He suspected that the house was occupied, at times, by some persons for evil purposes, who sought to terrify others from approaching the accursed spot. In spite of the appeals of his friends, and even of M'sieur le Prêtre, he vowed that he would go to the house armed, and pass night after night in it, till he could discover the perpetrators of these outrages; and if they would not present themselves before him, he would raze the house to its foundation.

"He asked many to accompany him, that he might have sufficient force to defend himself, if he were attacked; but no one would hearken to him.

"Eh bien, m'sieurs! He went alone; but he spent but one night in the house. He came home the next day, but not until near dark, so changed that his friends, at first, could hardly believe it was he.

"He spoke to no one; but his conduct was strange, and it was soon apparent that he—the bravest and handsomest man in the village, and the best hunter for miles around, who never missed his mark, nor returned from the forest without spoil—had become an idiot! He took to wandering about alone, always going well armed, but never doing harm to any one, and never more returning with game or skins from the forest; and *he*, just three months afterwards, drowned himself in the lake.

"So, you perceive, m'sieurs, that it is daring the power of the evil spirits to go to

seek them; and those who thus venture suffer for their daring.

"There are many of you," looking round upon her neighbours, "who well remember the poor, brave François Xavier Lemoine?"

There was a general murmur of assent, and the old dame continued—

"Since that time, m'sieurs, I have heard of none who have passed a night in the accursed house, save yourselves; but there are many who have incautiously ventured near it, after dark, who have heard strange cries that have filled them with terror; and many more, who, in nights of storm and tempest, in the cold winter, have seen the lights gleaming across the snow, and lighting up the woods and plains for miles around—such lights as are caused by no human power!"

Again the old lady's words were corroborated by the listeners, and our aged half-breed informed us that, though the land for a mile around the house belonged to it, none of the heirs of M'sieu MacSteven had ever dared to take possession of the property, or to pull down the house, for fear of the consequences of so doing; and that though he had heard that the property, in dresses of value and other articles, left in the house after the death of MacSteven was very considerable, no one had ever dared to remove a single article.

This statement, to a certain extent, appeared to be verified by what we had seen; though MacSteven must have had some furniture in the dwelling, and the old man did not say what had become of that, nor did we question him relative to the subject.

But with respect to the first portion of the above statement, I learnt, at a subsequent period, that the estate of MacSteven—like most of the landed property left by the earlier, inferior agents of the Company—was in the hands of the lawyers, had been so for no one knows how many years, and was likely so to remain until it was no longer worth contesting.

Most of these individuals, in former days, died intestate, and in the irregular life they led, regardless of laws which could not reach them, they frequently—if those who claimed to be their heirs were to be credited—contracted illegal marriages, or committed bigamy, or married secretly the squaws and other women with whom they lived. At their decease there were always a number of persons claiming to be their lawful

* One-fourth at least of the male population of the French Canadian and half-breed races of Canada bear the Christian names of Jacques Cartier or François Xavier—the former being the name of the first discoverer of the St. Lawrence River, the latter that of a zealous Jesuit priest, who converted great numbers of the Indians to Christianity.

descendants, who avowed that their mothers or grandmothers had been first—and, therefore, lawfully—wedded to the deceased, and that they, or those from whom they were descended, were, consequently, born in lawful wedlock. These parties not only contested the property thus left against the Crown, but also against one another, each one claiming descent from the earliest marriage; and as it was difficult, and, in fact, almost impossible, to discover the truth or falsehood of such claims, the estates were held in Chancery, or were bound up in some other way, so long as there was anything to be gained out of them. Hence the number of these tenements, in a state of ruin and dilapidation, scattered throughout the country.

We had now heard all that we were able to learn respecting the mysterious occurrences of the past night, although we had learnt nothing satisfactory, nor anything that tended in any degree to clear up the mystery.

Markham and I were anxious to return to the camp, and the lieutenant was equally desirous of joining his comrades at the Cedar Lake. So we made the venerable old dame happy with the gift of another half-dollar, and presented her also with the small stock of brandy and provisions that remained to us, and hiring a young man of the village for half-a-dollar to guide us to the regular road or path—which, we were informed, was four miles distant through the forest—we re-entered our respective sleighs, our guide seating himself beside Hoptown, who had a seat to spare in his sleigh, and set forth on our return.

On the way we conversed on the events of the past night, and the legends we had heard from the old dame in the half-breed village.

So far, however, from having heard any elucidation of the mysteries we could not comprehend, they had been rendered more incomprehensible than ever. Although it seemed to be impossible that we could each and all have been the dupes of imagination, we had, when the broad daylight returned, and in the absence of any other satisfactory explanation of what we had heard and seen, almost arrived at such a conclusion. Our visit to the half-breed village, however, had set at nought any such explanation as this. Even supposing it possible that the lieutenant had been led to find shelter from the storm

by approaching towards a bright illumination which had only appeared in his imagination, yet which had conducted him to the shelter he sought; and supposing it possible that, at an after period, each of us had *fancied* that he heard a frightful scream, and saw the figure of a female clothed in white, and heard also the mocking laughter and the horrible noise of the continuous rapping, and that our horses had also been terrified at the same moment by some unusual sight or sound—supposing, I say, that these strange fancies could have occurred to each and all of us at the same moment, such a supposition does not explain by what means our imaginations could have been excited to fancy a representation of events which had actually occurred in the spot a century before.

Not one of us had ever heard of the murder of a young woman by her paramour at the moment when he expected visitors to arrive; or of the concealment of the body of the unfortunate female in a chest, the lid of which was hammered down by the murderer; or of the arrival of the expected visitors, and the horrible carousal kept up in the brilliantly lighted room in which the body lay concealed from the sight of the revellers; yet we had fancied that we had heard the scream of terror heard by the Indian boy, according to the legend, and, at the same moment, had fancied that we saw the figure of the murdered woman flit across the head of the staircase, at the very spot where she had been struck down; and had subsequently heard the tap-tapping of the murderer in his endeavour to conceal the body of his victim; and, moreover, the young officer had fancied that he saw the brilliant illumination reported by the Indian boy to have shed a bright gleam of light across the broad expanse of snow, that must have been visible, through the storm, many miles distant.

If all this was mere fancy, there must have been some especially exciting cause to have created such fancies in our minds. In fact, the whole affair was inexplicable by any ordinary mode of reasoning; and though we each and all denied any belief in the supernatural, we could explain what we saw and heard in no other way than by admitting that it must have been caused by supernatural agency. As I observed at the commencement of this paper, unless I had heard and seen that which I have described, I could

not have believed it, and therefore I can hardly expect credence from others. But two other persons also heard and saw what I did; and although one of these individuals—the young lieutenant—has since died in the East Indies, the other, whom I have described as Markham, is still living, and still employed as Government surveyor, in Western Canada; and should he peruse this narrative, I am confident that he will freely acknowledge that I have represented nothing that did not actually occur, as represented, at the time and on the spot I have described.

So far as my memory serves me, after the lapse of so many years, I have adhered literally to the very words of the conversation that passed between myself and my companions; and have translated, as nearly literally as possible, the story told in French-Canadian patois by the venerable and chatty old dame in the half-breed village in the backwoods of the Far West.

I end my story as I began it, with the assertion that there is, in a greater or lesser degree, a latent feeling of superstition inherent in every human being. We may affect to deny and despise such feelings; nevertheless, there is truth in the oft-quoted phrase that Shakespeare put into the mouth of Hamlet—

“There are more things in Heaven and earth,
Horatio,
Than are dreamt of in your philosophy.”

THE END.

LAYS OF THE SHORT ONE.

BITTER BEER.

A SONG to cheer
Of the bitter beer,
A song for all times and seasons;
For those who think,
And for those who drink
Without analytical reasons.

It is not a song
Of the porter strong,
That beads in the pewter darkly;
Nor the brown four ale,
Nor the old and stale,
Nor the richest brewage of Barclay.

Nor the stringent Meux,
Whose fame rebukes
The strivings of each home brewer;
Whose incense steams
O'er the crowd that streams
Through the street of Oxford the newer.

For purest of ale
Is the Burton pale,

That's brewed by the beautiful river;
And its soft, sweet scent
Tells oft of the Trent,
And never tells tales of your liver.

And as sugar basins
And grocers' raisins
Are haunted by wasps in the summer,
So this wired flask
Seems ever to ask
For leave to buzz in a rummer.

Very good, no doubt,
Is your Guinness' stout,
The genuine Dublin that's creamy;
But the bitter beer
Need never fear
A draught that is heavy and dreamy.

There are no such ales
In our western Wales,
Though by Cwrw of Cymrw they're flowing;
Nor in Edinburgh,
However thorough—
And your Scot is, I ken, rather knowing.

I want not Truman,
Although I'm human,
Nor Watney's, the Wells of my slaking;
Nor Charrington, Head,
With ale amber red,
Nor Combe's, could I have it for taking.

Nor the ale of the Lion,
And soon I'd die on
The mixings of country brewers,
Who don't stand nice
About liquorice,
Or cocculus—base undoers.

One would soon be dead
With ale brought to head
With copperas—sulphatic crystals;
Cut short in its malt,
But dusted with salt,
And quassia, deadly as pistols.

Such drinks I hate—
A-dul-te-rate—
And in them I'd drown the brewer
Without any fear;
For he'd lie in his beer,
And then be a bit the truer.

Then give me the draught
So pure I've quaffed,
After wine nor spirits I'll dangle;
For me so bland
That red right hand,
Or the ruddy firm triangle.

Bass, Allsop, Salt,
Who used the malt,
Or the hops, I care not a stiver;
So long as it's pale,
Bright Burton ale,
And brewed by the Trent's broad river.

TABLE TALK.

THE POOR leader-writers and descriptive reporters on the subject of the Tichborne case have been writing heretofore

with their feelings dammed up by obstacles known as libel and contempt of court. They have spoken tenderly of the man on trial as "the defendant" and "the claimant." But condemnation has swept the barrier away; and one writer—the finest journalist England has ever seen—has been easing his mind, coming down upon the prisoner's head with pen and-ink thunder. Defendant no longer, claimant no more—he speaks of him in the same article as "a scoundrel, vagabond, impostor, liar, swindler, false witness, fellow, convict, Wapping bush-ranger, Wagga-Wagga slaughterman, stock-rider, forger, horse stealer, perjurer, egregious humbug, irreclaimable villain." It must be a relief, after writing of him so long with guarded pen. May we hear of him no more!

IT HAS OFTEN been a matter of surprise that a witness, when under cross-examination by some counsel who goads him with painful but irrelevant questions, does not take refuge in the simple expedient of refusing to reply. Again and again we see matters appertaining to the early life of a witness dragged into the light in a way that is far from seemly; and probably under fear of that bugbear, contempt of court, the unfortunate under examination suffering a very martyrdom, apparently for the pleasure of the audience. These remarks are drawn forth by a sentence or two uttered by the Lord Chief Justice during the closing in of the weary trial now at an end. In speaking of the questions put to Lord Bellew, the *Daily Telegraph* makes the judge to say that the witness "might very properly have refused to answer."

COOMASSIE IS BUILT on the side of a large hill of ironstone. This hill is among the last of the series of acclivities which commence with the Adansi, and terminate a little to the north of Coomassie. They are all densely wooded, and present precipitous sides to the south, sloping more gradually northwards. The country between the successive elevations is at times marshy, and always covered by thick brushwood. The city stands near a stream called the Soubin, which flows nearly all round it, and in the rainy season fills it with a pestilential fog. It is girt also with the dense forest, which stretches all the way from the coast for at least 150 miles. Three or four days' march-

ing, however, northward brings the traveller out of the bush; and there, it is said, the miserable paths are exchanged for comparatively good and broad roads, leading to the large towns in the interior.

COOMASSIE'S PRINCIPAL BUILDINGS are, of course, the King's palaces. The chief Royal residence is the Bantammah, on the north side of the town, and this alone is said to cover five acres of ground. It is, however, at one and the same time the Royal abode, harem, mausoleum, and magazine of military munitions. There are seldom more than six of the 3,333—the mystical number of the King's wives—resident in the palace. The remainder mostly reside in his *croom*, or country residence, at Barramang.

"READY-MONEY MORTIBOY," the successful novel which appeared in Volume IX. of this magazine, has been dramatized by the authors, and will shortly be produced at the Court Theatre. The principal characters will be sustained by Miss Litton and Mr. G. Rignold.

"SHIP AHOY!" our popular Christmas annual, has also been dramatized, and will be presented simultaneously at the Surrey and Glasgow Theatres—places of amusement sufficiently distant to prevent the rivals clashing in the slightest degree.

A SOMEWHAT PROMISING scheme for supplying us with the means of obtaining telegraphic communication with America at a cheap rate has for the present come to an end; for a circular has been issued to the subscribers of the Light Cable Telegraph Company, stating that "the number of shares applied for by the public not being sufficient to enable the directors to make arrangements for laying a cable during this year, they have resolved to make no allotment, but to return the deposit moneys in full to each applicant." The circular attributes the failure of the scheme to "the prejudiced attacks made by interested parties on this undertaking, casting doubts on the minds of investors as to the practicability of laying and working a light cable."

All Contributions are attentively considered, and unaccepted MSS. are returned on receipt of stamps for postage; but the Editor cannot hold himself responsible for any accidental loss. No unaccepted MSS. will be returned until a written application has been made for them.

ONCE A WEEK

NEW SERIES.

No. 325.

March 21, 1874.

Price 2d.

JACK'S SISTER; OR, WOMANLY PAST QUESTION.

CHAPTER XIX.

BABY WINS.



HANK God! old fellow, you're safe," Clifton cried, breaking off his merriment as his frank blue eyes met Jack's stare of bewilderment, fast deepening into a vision of the past horror. "I say, though, Jack, is that your usual mode of treating your friends? By Jove, they must be made of stout material. Just give

warning another time, will you? so that at least I may choose a soft place."

"You saved my life," said Jack, the deep, hoarse tones seeming to struggle up out of a well of sternly repressed emotion.

Clifton burst out laughing again.

"Please forgive me. I'll promise never to do it again. Better to carry home a cold corpus than have my very best sit-upons irretrievably ruined. 'Pon my soul, Jack, I'll send the bill in to you. By a providential chance, it is not paid yet. Now, then," as Jack lingered to look at the treacherous earth-slide lying heaped upon the beach below, "don't go trying the game over again: one wrestling match in an evening is enough for a lazy fellow like me, whatever it may be for you."

"Don't talk of it," Jack said, putting his

arm through his friend's as they turned away. "It is too awful to think of. If you had not been as quick as lightning, I might have been lying there now."

"Bleaching your bones on a mattress of stones."

"And only that your wrists are as strong as iron, I might have pulled *you* over with me," Jack went on, unheedingly. "Didn't you think of the risk, Clif?"

"I thought of my gloves," said Clifton, gravely; "and lamented beforehand the rents which I now see adorning them. But I decided that the colour was not becoming to me, and— I do not regret them. Have you done with the subject yet?"

"To you I have," Jack answered, half angrily. "I believe you'd joke over your own shroud."

"Unless it fitted me badly," put in Clifton, twisting his moustache carefully. "But as I always tell my tailor—"

"Hang your tailor!"

"By all means, so you find me a better."

"Ah, well! we'll see what your mother will say when I tell her."

"Tell *her*! No, that you won't. I'm in earnest now, Jack, and you must mind what I say."

"And why?"

"Why! My dear fellow, don't you see how nervous and agitated she is this evening, and yet you want to burst in with a sensational story to frighten her out of her wits."

"That is the last thing I should like to do to your mother," Jack answered. "But am I to say nothing to her?"

"If you'll oblige me so far. You see, Jack, the little mother is so delicate, she'd go and dream all sorts of horrors over a possible accident like this. *We* are all right. Let us take care to keep her so."

Jack nodded, obliged to yield, though sorely vexed at not being allowed to vaunt Clifton's readiness and strength to Clifton's

mother. The young fellow had had a shock, a peep of death in the midst of life, and he wanted to thank some one, or do something to prove the gratitude he felt for his preservation, and—he was not allowed. It was hard on him; and while Lady Gore and Clifton were busy over some of the preparations for departure during the evening, he managed to slip out of the room and the house in search of space for thought.

Not very far, only out into the fresh air; but, sit still a moment longer Jack could not. Something stirred within him, choking in his throat and dazzling his eyes; he *must* get out into the night breeze, and pant for breath, turn up his face to the deep blue dome of jewelled sky, and thank God he stood beneath it safe and sound, fold his arms on the breakwater, and live over again the danger past. Ah! dear, we human beings are curiously made. Jack would have walked into certain death if his duty called him, and never thought twice about it; the mere idea that Clifton might have been pulled over in his fall utterly unnerved him. Clifton! Well, it was only another thing for which to love that scapegrace better, if possible, than he had ever loved him before. Make a pretty little speech of thanks, Jack couldn't if his life depended on it; but I think he would have yielded everything that life held dearest, and thought it little, to benefit Clifton Gore even in the smallest degree.

The moon was just rising, kissing every rounded wave top into dimpled silver, shining white upon the clustered houses which straggled up the irregular hills at the back of the town, like disorderly guerilla hanging on to the skirts of the army below, and flooding the whole upper front of the hotel in one radiant sheet of argent flame. Behind, the lower part of the town lay buried in darkness, blacker from the contrasting light; save where here and there the redly glowing doorway of a public-house or gleaming candle in an upper window, made little ruddy smears and constellations of light amid the surrounding obscurity; and, far above, the Castle towered over all, dark as some mighty giant, except for one sharp line of silver revealing the ruined tower on its summit, and brooding frowningly over the sleeping city at its feet. All around, the salt sea breeze murmured in hushing accordance with the drowsy music of the sea; right in the centre of whose silvery breast rose clear and sharp,

like a fairy bark, the tapering masts and slender rigging of a revenue cutter. Close in the shadow of the fishing cove many a dark, shapeless mass lay crowded together, with here and there the flaring orange glow of an oil lamp, suspended at the mast-head, and repeated in the dark water beneath. Hoarse, bursts of song and hoarser laughter came from stern windows of stuffy little cabins, and rippled, mellowed by distance, over the sleepy ridge of the waves; with now and then the dip, dip of an oar, or creaking of a pulley; while overhead, from an open window of the hotel, strains of mirthful music floated out upon the warm night air, now drowning, now mingling with the murmurs of two lovers hand-clasped upon the balcony outside.

It was very late when Jack returned to the hotel. All the lights were extinguished. Even the moon had slipped behind a cloud; and no sound remained but the sough of the sea and the sigh of the wind. Clifton came out to look for him, and Jack gripped his hand and stood looking out for a minute or two in silence. It seemed to him as if he had been at some solemn service of the church, and as if the echo of that verse in the Litany, "from battle, murder, and sudden death," were still ringing in his ears. Presently, from the church tower hard by, chimed a deep "Amen," and the two young men went in to bed. They had no need to speak their thoughts to one another.

The parting came next day; but before the hurried breakfast was over, it had been arranged that Jack should stay on in the Gores' apartments, which had been taken for a month; till he received news from his friends. If Sir Henry were better then, Clifton would return, and they might finish the fortnight at St. Leonard's together. If not, Jack should have a letter; anyhow, two days' lingering in that pleasant town would be no severe penance. It was all settled in ten words; and then began the bustle of departure, the hasty drive to the train, the last hand-clasps; and then, Jack was alone. How horrid the place seemed!

That first day was indeed frightfully hard to get through! If it had not been for the possibility of Clifton's return, young Leyburn would, I think, have put himself into the next train, and rushed home in his desire to escape everything which reminded him of his friend's sunny presence. Even the sea had lost some of its savour now that bright

mocking face was gone from its shore; and Jack revenged himself by not going near it; spending the morning instead in writing a long letter to his father, full of yesterday's adventure and Clifton's praises; and the afternoon shut up in the coffee-room with newspaper and cigar. After this, need I say that the morrow found him heartily sick of himself, and craving for fresh air and exercise?

He started off before breakfast for a long walk, crossing Maze Hill and the meadows beyond, till he found himself on the outskirts of Hollingwood village; and turning round the corner of a brick wall, came face to face with his little friend of the white dog, and a boy whose face reminded him of home and Oxford in the same breath, and who coloured up with the sheepish air of an old acquaintance. Jack, quite glad in his loneliness to see anything familiar, looked at him hard, and exclaimed—

"Why, I know you, don't I?" Whereupon Percy, mumbling something into his shirt collars about "White of Oriel" and "Bibchester," Jack shook him heartily by the hand, assuring him he was awfully glad to see anybody from home; and extending a friendly salutation to the little girl as Percy's sister. Percy explained, introducing her formally as "Miss Baby Delamayne;" and the odd Christian name struck Jack as so appropriate that he could not help saying so with a laugh, which Baby echoed as frankly.

They were like old acquaintances in a minute; and on Baby mentioning that they were going for a walk in the same direction as Jack, it seemed only natural to extend his promenade for the sake of joining company. Had she been a *grown-up* young lady he would have bade a hasty adieu; but a ramble in Hollingwood Wood with a boy and girl was quite different; and he did not even feel inclined to grumble at having to curtail his steps to suit Baby's; or feel himself the least bored by her prattle. On the contrary, she was so bright, so wonderfully pretty and intelligent, that he found himself talking to her quite happily, and telling her all about Clifton and his sorrow at losing that young man as freely as though he had been conversing with Enid.

"And is he really *gone*?" Baby asked, in a tone which showed how thoroughly she sympathized with Jack's loss.

"Yes, early yesterday morning; but I'm

in hopes to get a letter to-morrow to say he is coming back again," Jack answered, quite pleased by her interest in his friend, and by the glad light in her blue eyes as she said—

"That *will* be nice for you. How I should like to see him!"

"So you shall, then," replied Jack, in much the tone in which he would have promised a piece of gingerbread to a well-behaved child. "That is, if he does come. I'll take advantage of knowing Percy, and bring him to see you."

Baby's rose-petal cheeks flushed with pleasure, and her golden hair looked perfectly lovely as she lifted her pretty face to meet Jack's smile. Not for *him*, nor for his sake, had she held out her clever little hand to make the acquaintance for which Maude and Kitty were also longing. He was only a great, stout young man, with neither wit nor beauty, and who evidently looked on her as a child. But it was his friend whom she aimed at—the hero whose praises he had been sounding—the sunny-haired young god of flesh and blood whose two brief visits to St. Leonard's had set many a female heart beating with pleasure and admiration—the Apollo Belvedere in nineteenth century attire on whom what little heart Baby possessed had gone out in quite a gush of secret enthusiasm, and who, as it happened, had never even noticed her among the crowd of pretty girls on the Marina. It was a cruel disappointment—a terrible shock—to find out that her trouble and her affections had been equally thrown away; and just as she had contrived such a neat plan in her astute little brain for winning Valentine through Orson, Damon through Pythias, Clifton Gore's attentions through his thick-headed friend's admiration.

Poor Baby! she was very young in years, after all, and her first feeling was divided between a desire to burst out crying, and a strong inclination to quarrel with the said friend for being the herald of Clifton's departure.

A born intrigante, however, never gives way to impulse. Baby conquered hers with an effort worthy of the Spartans of old, and managed instead to look all that was cordial and sympathetic; wherefore, as I have said, virtue (?) was rewarded by the prospect of her hero's return; and during the rest of the walk Baby made herself so

charming that when she insisted on Jack coming in to breakfast with them, he made little difficulty; and felt indeed rather glad at not being condemned to another solitary meal.

It was unkind of Baby, unsisterly—nay, even malicious. Was it not sufficient that she had contrived to make the acquaintance and engage the interest of this wealthy stranger all to herself, but she must bring him home at the very time when her unfortunate elders were sure to look and appear their very worst? Aye, and to give them no more warning than consisted in calling up Percy at the gate (he had lingered behind all the way), and telling him to run on and say he was bringing in an old friend to breakfast.

"We are very homely people, you know," Baby said, with the frankest dimpling smile, "and dear mamma is too great an invalid even to come down to breakfast; but you won't mind, will you?"

"No, indeed," said Jack. "Nothing like home and homeliness for my taste."

And Baby longed to tell him that his taste was very bad, and exactly the reverse of her own.

Has it ever fallen to your luck to appreciate the advantage of a good deep flounce to your chintz-covered sofa? Probably not; but if it had, you would understand how highly the Misses Delamayne valued theirs on the receipt of Percy's intelligence. Breakfast was virtually over, the rector gone to his study, and the young ladies dawdling over their tea-cups, wondering what had become of Baby, and languidly discussing an almost worn-out piece of scandal respecting a neighbouring clergyman, when Master White broke up the domestic picture of peace and harmony by delivering his cannon shot—

"And he's just coming in at the gate now."

Maude fled. She would have given worlds to remain—she of all others who sighed for the chances of matrimony in a safe and lucrative market; but hair and dress were alike too unrepresentable, and the door closed behind her to a rippling accompaniment of sisterly anathemas, wherein Baby's name was distinctly audible. Kitty seized hold of two or three dirty plates, and a saucer littered with heads and tails of dismembered shrimps, stuffed them under the sofa, and, flying to the glass, began straightening her

collar, and arranging the loose locks of hair on her forehead with a skilfully moistened finger; while Leonora, whose added years had taught her that it was less trouble to dress herself properly once for all in the day, and who therefore needed no finishing touches, thrust a couple of empty cups under the sofa in company with the shrimps, swept the crumbs off the cloth with her pocket handkerchief, and called Jane to bring up the cold meat with a prompt alertness which showed the inborn genius for contrivance still latent in the Hon. Mrs. Transalpine. The whole preparation barely occupied three minutes; and by the time Jack and Baby entered the verandah, two women, one beautiful and negligent, the other well dressed and graceful, were seated quietly at a well-arranged table; while the servant was just covering an ugly stain in the table cloth with a dish of cold roast beef.

"Naughty Baby! what an hour to come in!" cried Leonora, kissing the truant with sisterly fervour.

"And how famished you must be, darling!" cried Kitty, stroking the most bewitching golden tendril off Baby's forehead before turning with Leonora to greet their stranger guest with well-bred courtesy.

"A great friend of Percy's," Baby said, returning her sisters' embrace with a resentful consciousness of the favourite tendril's absence. "We met him in our walk; and I made him come in to breakfast, for I knew he must be as hungry as we were. Where's dear papa?"

"In his study, love. Percy, go and make your peace with him, and call him in. You have had your breakfast long ago, of course; but I dare say you'll be glad of another cup of coffee. Pray bring your chair near the table, Mr. Leyburn. Sugar, I suppose? I hope you can eat cold meat."

And Baby could have laughed outright, so brightly did Leonora's eyes glitter with secret anger as she turned them on her youngest sister in a pause of the sweetly sounding sentences.

Jack did not see it, of course: was, on the contrary, rather impressed by the indulgence shown to Baby's unpunctuality, which fairly shocked his methodical soul.

All looked smooth and elegant to him; and yet he was not happy. These two fine ladies, dressed so differently to either Enid or Lady Gore in the morning, seated in such

graceful positions, toying with their tea-cups, and talking in smooth, catchpenny sentences, like people in a novel, were something quite unbargained-for and undesired. Kitty's coquettish airs, crumpled finery, and slang-sprinkled repartees troubled his simple spirit far more than her beauty attracted him; and Leonora was worse. The aristocratic drawl, fashionable indifference to everything in life, and too be-jewelled fingers, were all types of the woman of the period whom he most hated. The rector did not come in. That message was *bien entendu* on both sides; and though Percy's studies were abrogated during the time of his friend's (?) stay, he was no assistance to that gentleman; but sat sipping his coffee with greater bashfulness than even Jack himself. Only for Baby's easy, happy cordiality coming to his rescue, the latter would have been tempted to run away at once.

"Don't you feel ravenous? I do," she said, with a little confidential air of *bon camaradeship*. "Please give me some marmalade, a big spoonful; and oh! do help yourself to some more beef."

And Jack obeyed, giving her what she wanted with a smile, but without any intelligible answer. How could he talk with those three pairs of feminine eyes upon him? eyes so blue and yet so sharp and hard! It was bad enough to sit there eating and drinking under their gaze; and as soon as civility permitted, he took his departure without having uttered half a dozen words beyond the "Yeses" and "Noes" called for by his hostesses' conversation.

"What an oaf!" Leonora exclaimed, as the door closed upon their impracticable guest.

"Baby deserves to have her ears boxed," said Kitty—"bringing that great, hulking ploughman in at breakfast time!"

And both sisters began their attack on the culprit, who only shook her curls saucily, and said if he came again she supposed she must entertain him all by herself.

Jack did come again, and Baby entertained him. But he brought bad news. Clifton had written to say that his father was much the same, and could not possibly spare him for a day or two at any rate. Would Jack mind waiting that time on the chance of his coming? Jack waited, of course; but his loneliness and longing for sympathy drove him to seek out Baby, at the risk of encountering those other terribly

furbelowed young women; and on this occasion fortune favoured him. The whole family were out of doors, playing croquet with half a dozen other gaily attired young people; and the sunshiny lawn, with its background of scarlet geraniums and trellised verandah, made a far pleasanter reception-ground than the drawing-rooms within to a bashful man like Jack. Baby, too, singled him out at once, and introduced him to her mother, who was kind, and set him at his ease in a pleasant, aristocratic manner, though without winning his heart like Lady Gore; and if Leonora and Kitty looked more formidable than before in afternoon array, and with the graceful Maude added to their forces, they were fortunately too surrounded by gentlemen to be able to open immediate fire on the new arrival; so that he was enabled to take shelter under Baby's wing, and confide his troubles to her sympathizing ear.

Baby looked sorry, and felt even more than she looked. Her sisters had been snubbing her savagely during the last two or three days; and there had been some whispered talk of sending the cadette on a visit to an old Miss Trevoil in London, which filled her heart with dread. Town in September, and with Aunt Honora! It was too horrible; and all because she had begun to put forth her claims to admiration, and had interfered with her elder sisters' designs. She did not want Jack. They might have him, and welcome, so she had Clifton; but now it seemed unlikely that Clifton would come at all; and if he did he *might* not like her; or she might be sent away, and so lose both. Would it not be better to make sure of Jack, who after all was young, rich, and good-natured, three qualities which went far to make up an eligible parti; and who could be dropped gracefully if the Apollo Belvedere *should* appear on the scene, and prove amenable to fascination?

Something like this passed through Baby's little head as she stood leaning on her mallet, her blue eyes raised sympathetically to Jack's sunburnt face as he poured out his selfish troubles.

"I am so sorry, so sorry," she kept saying, in soft, liquid tones.

And as the warm September sunshine clung about her slim white figure, and flickered in the waving tendrils of her loose, bright locks, Jack almost loved her for her

sympathy; and did not care a bit for Kitty's look of well-bred wonder when, in answer to a smiling invitation to join her side, he announced that he couldn't play croquet. She offered to teach him, much to Claude Mostyn's secret wrath, but Jack declined with blunt civility.

"Your mother and sister are going to show me the church," he said.

And so took his long shadow off the gold, green lawn, and departed with Mrs. Delamayne leaning on his arm, and Baby fluttering on before.

"She must certainly go to Aunt Honora," said Maude, and Kitty nodded.

At that moment Baby was just confiding to Jack, amid the woodland greenness of Hollingwood churchyard, that her sisters were very fashionable girls, and she—oh! she couldn't help it—but she did get so tired of the gaieties they were always running after.

"Please don't laugh at me, Mr. Leyburn. I know it is very childish and silly, and I dare say you like fashion and that sort of thing"—she knew perfectly well he hated it—"but I do like fun and home happiness so much more, and I think your sister must be so happy. What a beautiful name Enid is; and won't you please tell me more about her, and your dear old town? How I should like to see them."

The following day brought a letter from Clifton, announcing that though Sir Henry was better, neither parent could spare him from Strathgyle, and therefore he must set Jack free; and Jack read it dolefully, took it up to Baby Delamayne, and—didn't go. How could he when he had already engaged himself for a picnic to Fairlight on the morrow, and a dance next week, and that poor little thing seemed to lay such stress on his going? She was very fond of her sisters, but they were not like her, and were so much older and faster. Besides, he had promised, and no Leyburn ever broke a promise. Virtuous reminder! Alas! when men come to taking a high moral ground with their consciences, it is generally because the latter have been appealing against some new path—delightful, but dangerous to untried feet. Jack's path was covered with flowers. His head stood too high to see whither his feet were going; and Baby held his hand, and guided him so softly and so sweetly that he never thought of struggling, and simply followed where she led. One

pleasant outing followed another, and the end of the fortnight had come before he found resolution at last to tear himself resolutely away from the novel sweetness of this Calypso's grot. Even then, when the hour for parting had come, Baby said—

"Remember you have promised to come down again for the bachelors' ball next month. You will not change your mind, will you?"

And as Jack answered, holding her hand the while, "I will come if you write and tell me the day—I never change my mind," he felt the soft little fingers closing round his, and gave them such a grip that Baby could have screamed with pain. There *were* tears in her eyes when she said good-bye, and Jack carried those unshed drops all the way to Marshton Fallows with him, and thought they shone for his departure.

I am not going to linger over this part of my story. There are plenty of families in England like the Delamaynes; and their women have been the favourite heroines of song and romance for the last twenty years, until they have grown to be considered fair types of modern feminine society. They are not, however, pet subjects of mine; and fascinating though they be, I have only the same sympathy with them as with any clever gamester, pretty sure to mark the trick unless matched with an antagonist of equal skill.

Baby played her cards well; so well that, according to family policy, her sisters soon drew aloof, and suffered her to bag her too easy victim in peace.

"It will be one married, at any rate," Maude said, with an involuntary sigh that she was not the "one."

And Baby herself did not even frown when teased with her adorer's flight before anything was settled. She knew too well that he would return to the lure all the more readily for a little absence; and she was right.

For the first time in his life, Jack found home dull, bank work unutterably worse than college studies, and Enid—plain. Poor fellow! he was under a glamour, and could not tell what ailed him; fancying it was indisposition, and striving so vigorously to cure it by forced cheerfulness, unremitting industry, and long walks, that I really think he would have succeeded, and forgotten all about St. Leonard's, had it not

been for the perfumy little notes which *would* flutter down from Hollingwood, always written on some specious pretext of necessity, and always undoing the work just begun, and making him more restless and silent than ever.

The invitation for the ball came at last; and Jack might have guessed what had been his malady by the ardour with which he jumped at it, actually snubbing Enid when she remarked with innocent wonder at *his* beginning to care for gaieties.

"Only you always used to hate them," Enid said, and Jack looked still crosser. Of course he hated them, more than ever; but had he not *promised*? And did Enid wish him only to consult his own inclinations in life? Indeed, he became so severely moral that his sister became quite unhappy at her own shortcomings, and communicated the same to her father when they were alone again.

Mr. Leyburn laughed.

"Jack has been smitten, my dear," he said. "Some one at St. Leonard's, I fancy. I've seen it ever since he came back. Don't look so astonished. Boys go through this sort of thing as regularly as measles or whooping cough. A second view of his goddess will probably return him cured. He comes home again to-morrow; and we will ask some of your friends to dinner this week to distract him."

Alas! to-morrow brought the news that Jack had promised to spend a week with the Delamaynes, if his father could spare him; and before half that time was over, while the echoes of the dance music were yet ringing in his ears, and the waves on Fairlight beach rippling in fairy laughter to his companion's feet, Jack found himself asking Baby if she would like to come home with him, and be his wife—when she was old enough; and Baby answered—

"Yes."

ME AND MY DOGS.

SPOT.

"**I** S your master at home?"

"No, sir; please, he's gone down the town."

No sooner were the words uttered than a shaggy setter, that had been quietly giving me a wag of recognition, bounded by me, dashed down the gravel path, out of the

gate, and then along the road towards the town as hard as he could bound.

"There, sir—now who'd ha' thought o' that, him going off in that way, when master's gone sick visiting and didn't want the dog wi' him? He knows as well as could be what it meant when I said down town; and now he'll find master out, and he'll be so cross, master will, when he gets back."

"Didn't he know that the vicar was out?" I said.

"Bless you, no, sir!" said the girl. "When master don't want Spot along wi' him he slips off; and then, as soon as the dog has hunted about from room to room and can't find him, he begins to whine and chunther about, and would run off to look for him, only we keep one o' master's old hats on purpose, and bring it out and show it him, when he thinks master aint gone out, and goes and lies down by the fire. We did so this morning, and he was as good as could be until you came, sir, and he heard me say down town, when you saw how he shot off; and I couldn't help it, sir—now, could I, sir?"

As a matter of course, I sided with the vicar's maid, Jane; and then, following the example of the dog, I retraced my steps towards the town, and in ten minutes had forgotten all about vicar, dog, maid, and her account of Spot's instinct; but I was roused to a recollection of what I had heard by the dog himself, who came full rush out of the surgeon's garden, and darted off towards a private residence a little back from the road, on the other side. Here, however, he was also unsuccessful in finding the object of his quest, and, amused by his eagerness, I watched the dog go from garden to garden, and from house to house, in search of his master, but still without success. Now he looked up the street and now down; he peered into every shop that his master frequented; and every now and then, as if some sudden thought had seized him, he would bound off in a fresh direction.

Perseverance seldom goes unrewarded. After a good half-hour's search, Spot must have found out where his master sojourned, for I saw him sitting quietly outside Widow Whitman's door—a sure index that the vicar was within.

There was a certain pleasure, no doubt, attached to the possession of so intelligent an animal as Spot, but it must have been unpleasant at times to have so shadow-like

a companion, without the shadow's convenience; for, as I afterwards learned from the vicar himself, it was a work of difficulty to get away without Spot, and he corroborated in every particular the maid's statements.

But he was a capitally behaved dog was Spot, and he bore the best of characters in the village from everybody but such ladies as kept cats. It would be a hard task, no doubt, to find out the origin of the enmity between the canine and feline races; for though we may see instances in domestic life of its being overcome, yet there is the inborn dislike, and it was strongly developed in Spot, though to the vicarage cat he was amiability itself. Doubtless he had other weak points; but the special failing of Spot was cats, and the appearance of a furry tabby, sandy or black, set the dog off full race to chase the clawing animal on to some wall or up the bole of a tree, where he would lie down panting, his red tongue lolling out of his mouth, but with a graceful curl up at the end, and watch his enemy for hours.

But all cats were not afraid of him, and before now I have known a fierce Tom turn at bay, swelling his tail out into the likeness of a bottle-brush, arching his back till all four legs were close together, and then, spitting and swearing, glowering with distended eyes and bristling with fierceness, as he offered battle in a way which Spot invariably refused; while more than once he has been known to retire with nose bleeding from the effects of a rapid "one, two," delivered like lightning upon either side, and in painful proximity to Spot's eyes.

Upon such occasions Spot would stand still for a moment, looking hard at his enemy, and then beat a retreat, with head turned over shoulder; but if, ceasing his warlike, defensive attitude, Tom recommenced flight, Spot was after him directly, following up his attack until the cat was in safety.

He has been known to slay cats; but as a rule such matters were hushed up, and the vicar tried hard to break him of his propensity, but in vain. It was rather a scandalous matter that at such an abode of peace and goodwill as the vicarage a killer of cats should be harboured, but so it was; and more than one lady who had been outraged in her feelings by the loss of cat or kittens informed me that her conscience would not allow her to go to church in consequence, and that she considered herself to have been regu-

larly driven to chapel by that dog. The vicar always said that he did not believe it, for there must have been a previous lurking after the meeting-house, and that the dog had been seized upon as an excuse.

Ill-natured people talked largely at the inoffensive old gentleman, because he did not have the dog shot; but the vicar said he would not have him shot if he killed every cat in Bubbley, for they were always scratching in his flower beds and destroying his choicest seeds. And, besides, he said that he believed it to be all his own doing, through once setting Spot after a black and white vixen that he had found in the green-house, and who demolished half a dozen pots of geraniums before she was driven out.

"He never used to take any notice of cats till then," said the vicar; "so why should I have him killed for what is my fault?"

"Try a muzzle," I suggested.

But the old gentleman only shook his head; and I must confess that I do not think it would have looked what he used to call seemly, for an elderly clerical gentleman to go out with a dog that was obliged to be muzzled. Certainly, dogs are muzzled sometimes during the hot months, with an idea that it is safer, and to give confidence to nervous people; but as a rule the mouth straps are put on to prevent unnecessary slaying of brother dogs, or combats with other animals.

Spot never interfered with brother dogs, always passing them in a quiet, serious manner especially his own; but he had a slight leaning towards cows, taking an occasional run in the fields where they were and causing a terrible commotion, and no doubt anti-lacteal excitement, as, with heads down and tails up, the sleek butter-producers would break into a lumbering gallop, to Spot's intense delight so long as the cows ran; but come a stoppage, and let some long-horned dame, instead of running, turn and look wonderingly at the disturber of the peace of the pasture, and Spot would, as in the case of cats, suddenly remember that he was wanted elsewhere, and begin to trot back, with the cows formed into a semicircle, and following him up closely; now and then, too, indulging in a frisk or lumbering bound which seemed to somewhat startle Spot, and hastened his steps till he was outside the gate, over which the cows would stretch their heads and stare until he was out of sight.

Spot had many friends, even though, like the rest of the world, he had his enemies. He was always a well-fed dog; but at various places in the village he could command a bone if he wanted one, by way of a lunch, or to amuse himself between meals. But no one took greater interest in him than old Mrs. Barley, the sexton's wife; who, however, proved rather too good a friend, often nearly killing the poor dog with kindness. For Mrs. Barley was particularly fond of what is vulgarly termed "quacking;" and when she could not find a human being upon whom to try her nostrums, she would physic the vicar's dog. Poor old soul, she had never heard of homœopathy, which would have proved a blessing in her case; since very few shillings would have fitted her out with a complete set of globule bottles, and she might have doctored and doctored, and never injured the constitutions of any of her patients.

But the science of homœopathy had not invaded the little village of Bubbly Parva, and Mrs. Barley used to prescribe herbal and mineral remedies—the minerals being confined to two, Epsom salts, and that strangely scented powder, milk of sulphur; while as to the herbal, it was wonderful what she would do with camomile tea. I knew one medical man who prescribed chlorodyne for sixty per cent. of the maladies he had to cure; and another who pinned his faith to iodine and its combinations, and, no doubt, with justice. But Mrs. Barley's great specific was camomile tea, and where she did no good she certainly did very little harm; while in a great many cases the two old women—Mrs. Barley and Dame Nature—between them often patched up a man, to the great injury of old Joe Barley's trade.

So whenever Mrs. Barley saw Spot panting rather heavily or a little rough in his coat, she coaxed him in, and, to use her own words, "made him a mess," which the dog obediently lapped up.

"He has his odd times and ailments, like other folks, poor fellow," then Mrs. Barley would observe to her neighbours, and no doubt she did Spot a great deal of good; while it must be admitted that the old woman's kindness was genuine, and without hope of fee or reward.

No doubt the vicar looked askance at Spot when he was said to have been the cause of Mrs. Fink's or Miss Stacey's seat being vacant in the old church; but the old

gentleman was rather far-seeing, and labouring away at his quiet, practical old sermons, he knew well enough that the stray sheep would return to his fold after a few months' absence; for no parishioner who left the church could ever stand the local preachers at the chapel for more than six months without returning to the mother building for tonic doses from the vicar to restore his shattered religious nerves. The men, no doubt, meant well, and considered that they had had calls to the work; but for all that it was rather painful to sit and hear Mortiss, the carpenter, hammering and stammering, and introducing his favourite elocutionary form of questioning, "Is it becoss—is it becoss?" or Black, the tinman, who took a text, and then hammered awhile before putting it in a sort of mill, and then—blind old horse that he was—going round and round in the same old circle, till half his audience had sought refuge in sleep. Then there was Bracebit, the tailor, a very strong man in "the church," a pale, serious man, who adopted semi-clerical vests of his own make, and always wore white cravats of the stiffest and broadest—the man who, before dazzling his hearers with the glories of Heaven, led them to it by degrees, and introduced them to the palace "where Queen Victoria was seated upon her throne, her crown upon her head, and surrounded by her brilliant courtiers with their enchantments," whatever those enchantments might be. It was very irreverent to think so, no doubt; but after the enchanting description of her Majesty, some of his hearers would have been rather disappointed if they had gazed upon the plainly dressed widow lady who sits at the head of this vast empire. They might have been disposed to exclaim, like the old countryman in the song upon being introduced to a sight of George III.—

"Is that the King that I sees there?
I seed a chap at Bartlemy Fair
More like a King than that chap there."

But Bracebit meant well, though he always divided his sermon into six parts, and then contrived to get those six parts and their threads hopelessly entangled before a quarter of the hour he always allowed himself had elapsed. His discourses were always a hopeless maze to himself and to those who listened, though he never lacked fluency, but kept on without a pause, lead-

ing you here and there, and showering down quotations upon your head. He would take you into his maze at Genesis, and then, after a weary wander, bring you out somewhere amongst the Epistles; for, in spite of his efforts, he never reached Revelations. He often took it as a starting point, being rather fond of the imagery the book contains; but upon these occasions he travelled backwards, if he did not always.

"We can preach without a book, eh, Mr. Black?" he would say to the tinman; and then they would both laugh pleasantly at the want of ability in the grey headed old university man, who always took his clearly written, carefully worded sermons into the pulpit with him, and preached calmly, earnestly, and practically for about five and twenty minutes; while Spot lay patiently winking in the porch, with his head resting upon one of old Joe Barley's big boots, till the last word was uttered, when he would jump up and trot round to the vestry door, and wait for his master's advent.

The old vicar saw matters in their real light; and though he objected to Spot's cat hunts, yet he knew well enough that no quiet, thoughtful person would leave the old worship for so trivial a cause, and judged correctly enough that matters would right themselves. He never told the recanting ones of their failings, but had many a quiet chuckle to himself upon the weakness of human nature in general.

There were some houses where Spot was welcome for his master's sake, and some where he was not; and by means of his delicate, sensitive organization the dog could tell where he should enter and where refrain; consequently, there were a number of nooks and corners where, some time or another in the afternoon, you would find Spot—generally pleasant, dry, sunny niches, where he could bask in the sun while waiting for his master, ready to trot on to the next calling-place. And when Spot was on duty after this fashion, he was a fixture pro tem. No wanton dog could tempt him away, no friendly whistle, no travelling cat. Why, he would not even stir for a bone; and, if you wished him to partake of your bounty, you must place it within reach. Spot seemed to consider that his master was under his charge, and a strong, religious sense of duty undoubtedly pervaded the dog's being; while it was rare indeed that you encountered the venerable old gentle-

man without the dapple-coated dog being close at his heels. Visiting, gardening, it was all the same; while the task of carrying a glove seemed to make the dog supremely happy. Why, there was a stained place in the middle of the vicar's old silk umbrella, caused by Spot carrying it crosswise in his mouth, like a huge bitt, and getting his head wrenched first on one and then upon the other side, as he encountered legs and posts in his travels. He was especially clever with a cross-handled basket, and was often the bearer of fruit or some other token of the old gentleman's kindness to his parishioners—carrying it carefully to its destination—sure now of a welcome when the vicar raised the latch to admit him to the cottage they sought.

"I taught un to pull ta little bell, the ting tang, sir," Joe Barley said. "Ta vicar always used to get to ta church at ten minits to 'leven, and then ta dog would come to me, and I let him hold o' ta end of ta rope. He never did no good, sir, only tugged, I rung; but pleased un, and he'd pull away like owt. He were a good dog, sir; and we kep' him ta six months he lived arter vicar died, and I never told nobody, sir. But when owd Spot giv' up—bein' always ailin' like arter his maester died, and the missus never able to do him no good wi' her brewins—when he giv' up and died, I says to myself, I says, 'You were nobbut a beast, Spot, and 'taint right 'praps, but I'm part maester here, and no one need know nowt about it.' So I shoulthers my owd mattock and shovel, and I makes him a little grave close aside the owd vicar's vault; and that's where owd Spot lies, raight or wrong—bein' ta first dog I ever know'd buried in ta churchyard."

ONLY A YEAR.

CHAPTER I.

"I HAVE BEEN A FOOL."

A CHILL, bleak morning in February was slowly breaking over London. Dirty snow, only half trodden down and melted by yesterday's traffic, lay here and there in patches along Pall Mall. On the steps of his club, lighting a cigar, stood a young man, Archer Thyrle by name. He had been playing écarté all night, and had lost about £300; but that was a matter of small importance to him, seeing he was master of

many thousands a year. He had also been drinking hard, but he showed no sign of being even "screwed." He had been trying very earnestly to get rid of the thoughts uppermost in his mind, and the efforts he had made had failed, as such efforts generally do.

He walked slowly through the dingy, wet streets, on his way to the Charing-cross Hotel, and as he walked he thought—

"I have been a fool—a fool ever to care for such a woman, and a far greater to still remember her. No man but a fool would have stood what I have from her without making her feel too. But this shall be the end. I will forget her at once. It is only a year ago since I first saw her, and is that one year to spoil my whole life? It is the most unreasonable folly, and I have had enough of it. But I am sure she knows that I sail to-morrow. Gilfred must have said so, because he told me his mother wished me to dine with them before I should leave England. Well, I have taken my leave of Miss Kyriel to-night, whether she liked it or not. It was lucky Gilfred told me she was going to hear Nilsson, with these new friends of hers, as I had time to take a box with a good view of theirs. A man is privileged to stare through an opera glass, so I said my farewell to the proud, beautiful face. Would to heaven I had never seen it! I took my last look at her. Yet, oh! Phillis, Phillis, when you sat there looking so calm, so cold—when you never vouchsafed me a single glance, to keep me from going to the devil in the time to come—did you never remember that it was the last day of the year we have known each other? This day last year—this 10th of February, was the first day I ever saw you."

Mr. Thyrle walked on through the half-thawed snow until he reached the Charing-cross Hotel, when he paused a few minutes at the door to finish his cigar, his eyes bent on the cold, dismal scene outside.

CHAPTER II.

"WHAT A BEAUTY SHE IS."

ON that previous 10th of February to which Archer Thyrle referred in his thoughts with so much regret, a very early breakfast was spread at the Manor House, near Hallingford, Knollinghamshire. It was seven o'clock, and a wild, dark morning for the time of year. A roaring fire chiefly illuminated the room, and shone on the well-

covered table, the dark oak panels of the room, and the slight figure and fair face of a girl of about eighteen, who was deeply engrossed with a silver coffee pot. Presently the door opened, and a great, silky-haired setter entered, followed by two young men in buckskin and pink. One of them shook hands with the young lady, and said good morning; the other, evidently a brother, submitted to be kissed, and demanded coffee forthwith.

"And where's Phil? We have a good way to go this morning. The meet is at Hollingworth."

"She was just ready when I came down, Gilfred, ten minutes ago."

The girl in question entered the room as they spoke, attired in her habit and riding hat. She was rather tall, with a graceful figure; and Phillis Kyriel's face was one which most men were slow to forget. It was a face beautiful in feature and contour, only slightly tinged with colour, save on rare occasions, when a very rich hue would sweep across the white skin. Yet it was not on colouring or even perfection of form that her beauty depended; it was much more on the mobility of those features by which she showed—or sometimes disguised—every changeable mood which swayed her, and on her expressive dark eyes—which, indeed, were occasionally allowed to express, under their long lashes, more than their owner would ever corroborate.

It was a face which most men—all men—admired, and which all men regretted to have ever loved; and it was said by the gossips of Knollinghamshire that some men had loved Miss Kyriel desperately—"better than she—notwithstanding the beauty people raved about—deserved."

Since she was a girl of eighteen or nineteen had Phillis Kyriel reigned undisputed queen over all the beauties in Knollinghamshire, and during that time she had earned for herself the undesirable character of an unmitigated, heartless coquette. Not a man came within sight of this syren who was worth the trouble of fascinating, and escaped scatheless. And what fault was it of hers, she argued occasionally with her brother—the only one of her friends who dared to seriously remonstrate on the subject—if men chose to be befooled on her account? He surely would not have her marry one of them, despising them all in her heart as she did? It was clearly no matter of hers. Let them

make victims of themselves—idiots of themselves. It amused her, and it did them no harm. In fact, it did them a great deal of good. She felt she was quite a benefactress to the whole species, for taking so much conceit out of the race, and giving it some wholesome experience in lieu thereof. And all that Gilfred could do after this sort of nonsense was to shake his head gravely and be silent.

"What a beauty she is, and what eyes she has!" thought Mr. Brooke, a brother officer of Gilfred Kyriel's, down at the Manor House for a little hunting.

Phillis, holding her cup while her sister filled it, was regarding the young officer with the optics in question; and while his own became a little confused, and his colour rose under the quiet gaze, her thoughts were very far away.

"Do you know, Gilfred," she spoke rather slowly, walking back to her place with her coffee, "do you know that Hasson Grainger has come back to Akenhurst?"

Her brother's brow fell at these words.

"Well," and he looked up rather sternly, "I don't see that you have anything to do with it if he has."

"I suppose not," she replied, shortly, and a rather awkward silence followed.

The younger sister made an effort to break it.

"Didn't you say, Gilfred, that some people have come to Merresford Hall lately?"

"Yes, Kittie. Terrible snobs, I believe. I've not seen them, but Jack Martin told me they are Scotch people, or from the north somewhere, and he had seen one of them at the station—an awful old creature, a female specimen."

"Are they very rich?"

"Frightfully rich. They have bought the whole of the Merresford estates, as well as the Hall, and the house in Grosvenor-square."

"Manufacturers?" asked Phillis.

"No, I think Jack said iron. There are mines, you know, up in the northern counties where they get heaps of iron-ore, and these people own a lot of them."

"Well, I suppose we shall never go to dear old Merresford again, Fred," said Phillis, with a sigh; "we have had many a merry day there."

"It is a sad thing how the family has gone down," observed Kittie.

"What happened to the Merresfords?" inquired Mr. Brooke.

"Much the same as would happen here if I were to break my neck," answered Gilfred, sadly. "Old Merresford, one of the jolliest old fellows I ever saw, managed to squander his money—it's not hard to do, God knows. After his death, young Frank Merresford, the only son, was killed in a railway accident; so the property was all sold, and the money went to the next-of-kin, a man who came over from America and went back again when he had got all that he could. The poor boy, Frank, had left no will."

"You won't much like the new-comers, then, I fancy."

"The best way is to have nothing to do with them," said Phillis, haughtily, rising to leave the room.

"Are the horses round, Phil?" called her brother.

"I don't know—I am going for my watch. I will look."

"I can't remember the name of these iron people," said Gilfred. "Do you recollect, Kittie?"

"No, but it will be in the paper."

She found it, and read—"Mr. Thyrlé."

"What is the name?" demanded Mr. Brooke, with some eagerness. "Is the Christian name mentioned?"

"Yes, 'Archer'—Mr. Archer Thyrlé. What an odd name!"

"It must be the same," said Mr. Brooke; "and, if so, you will find him a right good fellow. A certain Archer Thyrlé, from Cumberland, was the great chum of my eldest brother—Ned, in the Lancers, you know, Kyriel; was at school and at Cambridge with him, and afterwards they went over half the world together, to America, India, New Zealand, and I don't know where not. I wonder if this is the same man."

Phillis returned, announcing that the horses were awaiting them, and Mr. Thyrlé was forgotten in the hurry of mounting and trotting away.

Rather a sad little face watched the merry party disappear in the distance. Kittie looked and longed, but for her life she dared not have mounted the very "light-hearted" Dickie, Miss Kyriel's hunter, on to which that young lady sprang so lightly. Kittie had no courage, even for a lame old pony; Phillis had a double share, and so on the quiet patient little Kittie fell the chief weight of the domestic cares, and the greater part of the tending of their invalid

mother. It was with a long sigh that she turned away to think of these things; and while unsentimentally settling about dinner with Mrs. Dixon the housekeeper, her heart was far away with the riders. Poor little Kittie! Mr. Brooke was a second son, a lieutenant in a line regiment, with two or three hundred a year for pocket money; half in love already with the beautiful Phillis; a very nice fellow, but not so wonderfully handsome or good or clever as Kittie imagined him; for this silly little girl would have given more for one of the many admiring glances he bestowed on the careless Phillis than she dared to think of.

So the dinner was a hazy affair to her; and while tenderly assisting at her mother's toilette, came before her eyes visions of a scarlet hunting coat, fair curly hair, and a gossamer moustache.

CHAPTER III.

"I AM NOT A GENTLEMAN BY BIRTH."

AS Phillis, with her brother and Mr. Brooke, approached Hollingworth woodside, where the meet was held, she noticed, standing rather apart from the group of other hunters already assembled, a horse she had never seen before, the rider being also unknown to her. He was a gentleman apparently about thirty, or perhaps thirty-five, with no peculiar beauty to boast of as to his physiognomy.

He had dark hair and a dark drooping moustache, deep-set grey eyes, and his face was much browned by sojourn in foreign lands, or voyaging by sea. His horse—a thoroughbred, powerful bay—and his figure had attracted other attention than that of Phillis Kyriel.

The man's figure was simply perfect. Not too tall for strength, not too broad for symmetry; powerful, lithe, yet firmly knit; and an utter unconsciousness of admiration or comment completed the picture, and was displayed even in the careless ease and grace with which he sat his hunter.

"Who is that stranger," Phillis inquired of her brother, "on the splendid bay horse?"

"Don't know—looks like a gentleman, too. Some fellow, I dare say, staying with the Roses, or perhaps from the barracks at Knollingham, though they certainly don't often turn out on beasts like his. Wherever is Brooke off to? Why, he is speaking to him. How the deuce does he— Oh, beg

your pardon; how are you, Sir George? This ought to be a good morning, eh?"

"Not so sure," said Sir George Rose, a hearty old gentleman with a red face and white hair—he shrugged his shoulders—"too cold, I think, and looks like snow. What do you say, Miss Phil? Ah! the north wind has trotted your pretty roses out, so you must not quarrel with it."

"I don't mean to," she laughed; "it is a charming day, though this is certainly anything but the orthodox southerly wind. Is Florence not here to-day?"

"You will find her talking to Lady Alice Ashley—by the road there. Lady Alice has driven her ponies over."

As Phillis crossed the field to speak to her friends, she was intercepted by Brooke and the stranger.

"Can I escort you anywhere, Miss Kyriel?" asked the lieutenant, with some trepidation.

"Yes. Will you go with me a couple of hundred yards to the pony carriage on the road there?" adding in an undertone, "who is your friend? He looks such a terrible aristocrat—a young duke, at least."

Brooke replied merely by an introduction.

"Archer, let me introduce you. Mr. Thyrlé—Miss Kyriel."

"I never heard the name before," thought Phillis, as Mr. Thyrlé raised his hat and bent his head to the beauty. "I wonder if he is clever. He does not look stupid."

A sudden agitation on the part of the assembly announced a move, so Phillis abandoned her expedition to the pony carriage, and turned back with Mr. Brooke and Mr. Thyrlé. Not much opportunity was afforded her for testing the powers of the latter gentleman, as there was a speedy find, and a run of fifty minutes over the best country in Knollinghamshire. After this it began to snow a little; the wise took their way homewards; but another find was declared inevitable, and Phillis, who cared little for wind or weather, decided on staying to see. They were a long time about it, but there was another find, and a run which finished in the next county; but before getting there, Phillis's horse fell lame. Poor Dickie had given his right foreleg a slight wrench, when jumping an awkward fence; and Miss Kyriel found herself in the cheerful position of being alone, on a lame beast, in a part of the county she knew nothing about, very

hungry, not a habitation or a human being in sight, with the snow beginning to fall fast, no money, and daylight closing in. Both Gilfred and Brooke, in the excitement of the run, had forgotten to look after her; and she was rather annoyed at being left behind in this uncereemonious way, and also provoked not to know whether the way she was pursuing was towards home or not; but she persuaded herself that, if she did not fall in with any of the hunt, the name of Kyriel would be known at any village or farmhouse she came to, and would gain admittance for her.

But her progress was very slow, and the mere act of riding a horse in pain is painful. After about an hour of this she was going slowly along a lovely lane, with high hedges and steep banks on each side, which rather sheltered her, when she saw the flash of a red coat at the top of the fence. In another moment a horse and his rider had accomplished a descent into the lane. The owner of the red coat then, descriing a dim figure through the gloom, quickly approached her. Mr. Thyrlé again raised his hat to Miss Kyriel.

"Are you alone, Miss Kyriel?" he asked, hastily. "I have lost the hounds, and I suppose you know nothing of where they are gone?"

"Indeed, I don't," and she related her misfortune; whereupon Mr. Thyrlé dismounted, and examined the horse's legs very carefully.

"If you will take my advice," he said after this, "you will allow me to change your saddle on to my horse. I am afraid this poor fellow has got rather a bad sprain."

"I am so sorry—poor Dickie! But I don't understand you, I think—"

"I want you to ride my horse, Miss Kyriel. Yours will not carry you much farther, so I will lead it."

"You are very kind," answered Phillis, a warm colour overspreading her face, and hesitating to accept such an offer from a perfect stranger; "but I really can't think of giving you so very much trouble. Besides, I don't in the least know how far I am from home."

"It will be no trouble—a very great pleasure," he replied, coming to her side to help her off.

"But I am putting a stop to your sport—I am so sorry," she said again, still pausing.

For answer he took the reins from her hands; she touched his shoulder lightly, and was on the ground. He set to work at once, and in a few minutes had made the change of saddles, and had mounted her on to the beautiful horse she had so much admired in the morning, and her new friend was leading poor Dickie by her side.

"I am sure I don't know how to thank you, Mr. Thyrlé," she said. "I don't know what I should have done but for you. How long do you suppose it will take to get home at this rate?"

"I don't know where your home is, Miss Kyriel."

"I live at the Manor House, about five miles from Hallingford."

"You must forgive me for my ignorance," he said; "but I am a stranger here, and I am not sure in what direction the Manor House is. East or west of Hallingford?"

"Five miles due north."

"I was told, about half an hour ago, that we were something like fifteen miles due south of Hallingford. It is past five o'clock, and, at the rate we are going, we should probably travel twenty miles in five or six hours."

"What *am* I to do?" exclaimed Phillis, agast. "I can't think of letting you walk through this snow with me for hours! What can I do?"

"I don't see any better occupation open to you than your present one."

"Do let me get on Dickie again," she pleaded.

"I am going to leave him at this farmhouse, if you will let me. The sooner he is at rest the better, and we shall get on quicker without him."

"But what are we to do?" she demanded again, in despair.

"I almost think," he answered, as they entered the farmyard, "that if the people here have any accommodation, it will be really the best for you to stay. I think it looks as if it would be a very heavy snow-storm."

After some trouble, he succeeded in bringing a very surly man to the door. He took Thyrlé's money readily enough when offered, but declared he had no room for ladies and gentlemen. It took a great amount of discretion and bribery on Thyrlé's part to persuade him to bring out a little refreshment for Miss Kyriel, and to give stable room for the night to the lamed horse. But this at last was done, with much grumbling. Some

bread and butter, and a little hot gin and water—which Thyrlie insisted on procuring, in default of brandy, and then had to insist a great deal more to make her drink—was all that was to be had. It required no great discernment to find out that the owner of the farm was celebrating his birthday, or some equally festal event, or had taken advantage of the “missus” being away to make himself considerably more than half drunk.

Having seen Dickie comfortably housed in the stable, Thyrlie rejoined Miss Kyriel. And as they left the yard, he said—

“We must try at the next farm, I think; perhaps we shall fare better. I got some very vague directions from the stable boy as to where the farm in question is—he said it was within half a mile.”

“You are a stranger here, I think you said?” Miss Kyriel asked.

“Yes; I came to Knollinghamshire about a fortnight ago.”

“And you have not been in this county before?”

She was anxious to find out something about him, but scarcely knew what to say to that end.

“No.” He seemed quite willing to gratify her. “That is, I have never been here to stay. I am a native of Cumberland.”

“I suppose it is a very bleak country there?”

“Far from it, I assure you. It is the loveliest spot in England; and you might go from end to end through it, and not meet with such a reception as we did at that farm.”

Phillis felt rather ashamed of the farmer.

“I think that man was tipsy,” she ventured.

“I am quite sure he was, but I don’t see that is any excuse for him. It is a night one would not turn a dog out in.”

There was no sign of any other farmhouse yet, and the snow came down thicker and thicker.

“You know Mr. Brooke?” recommenced Phillis.

“Yes, a little. His elder brother is my greatest friend. We were at the same school and college, and travelled a few years together also.”

“How I should like to know where you are staying,” she thought. “Do you know the Roses?” she continued.

“No, their place is between Merresford and Hallingford, I think.”

“They were the Merresfords’ nearest neighbours. I believe the poor young fellow who was killed on the railway—Frank Merresford—was going to marry one of the Miss Roses.”

“His death was a very sad thing,” remarked Mr. Thyrlie.

“Terribly sad. He was such a nice, clever, handsome boy. We used to know him so well, and his father, and mother, and cousins. We have gone constantly to Merresford ever since we were little children, and I can’t bear to think of it, in the hands of strangers—and such strangers, too!”

Had it been light enough, a sudden change in Thyrlie’s expression—a tightening of his lips, a dark flush across his sunburnt face—would have warned her that she was on dangerous ground. But he only said—

“I think I scarcely understand you.”

“You will very likely not have heard, as you are only a visitor here, that all the Merresford property has been bought by some dreadfully low people—I don’t remember their name—quite uneducated people, who have by some chance made quantities of money in trade—coal trade, iron trade, I don’t recollect what it was—something dirty and vulgar, I know. It is intolerable to think of dear old Merresford passing into such hands.”

She spoke haughtily—carelessly, little thinking that every word went with a cruelly hard sting to the proud, sensitive heart of her companion. For more than a minute they went on through the sleet and the gathering darkness in profound silence. He put his hand on the neck of the horse, and looking straight in front of him, said—

“You imply that it is more a fault than a misfortune to be the son of vulgar, uneducated parents. Do you think so?”

A moment’s reflection on this question might have shown her the truth, but she answered heedlessly as she had spoken before—

“It is such a vulgar and uninteresting subject that I have never thought about it at all.”

Again a pause. Then he resumed, in a rather hard tone, as if he was compelling himself to speak—

“Did you not say you don’t remember the name of the purchaser of Merresford?”

"Yes. I don't know that I ever heard it."

"The name is Thyrlé," he said, still walking on, with his hand on the horse's neck, and still without looking towards her.

Then, as by a sudden blaze of light, she knew that she had blindly and stupidly insulted him, and how could she tell how deep might be the wound to him? Much depended on the accuracy of what she had said. If it were false, or even exaggerated, he surely would not much feel it; but what was the man's nature? What could she do? What would she not give to unsay those words so recklessly uttered? With a quick impulse she laid her hand on his, which still rested on the horse's neck, and she spoke eagerly, bending towards him—

"Mr. Thyrlé!—will you forgive me? I spoke in such utter ignorance! What can I say to you!"

Her tone was one of such acute self-reproach that Thyrlé's pride, which had taken the alarm, and bristled up rapidly, subsided. Her hand was retained for a moment.

"You have said enough, Miss Kyriel. I cannot think you meant to wound me."

"Indeed I did not. I can't forgive myself. You see, I was very prejudiced against the successors to the Merresfords, and what I heard of you has not been true."

Again he compelled himself to speak, after a short pause.

"You have heard the truth, and there is no reason why I should be offended to hear it. My father began life as a common labourer in some iron-works. He was clever and industrious, was advanced to higher posts, and made many successful speculations. Before his death, he was a partner in the same works, and the owner of large iron mines in Cumberland. It is quite true that I am not a gentleman by birth."

THE CASUAL OBSERVER.

VERY FISHY.

DOUBTER concerning whitebait, I referred to a work of natural history, wherein I learned that the Latin name was *Rogenia alba*; that it belonged to the family Clupeidæ; that it was distinguished by having teeth on the palate, and pterygoid bones on the vomer, and on the tongue. Now all this was very scientific, but it was

not interesting; so I tried Greenwich, entered one of the well-known inns and partook of refreshment, served by a waiter like a sequestered rector, of severe aspect, and with a white cravat that was stiffened to crackling point.

"Do you know anything about whitebait, waiter?" I asked, mildly.

"Whitebait, sir, yessir! One whitebait Number 4 d'reckly!"

I turned hastily to see my friend taking his lips from a tube, and what could I do? Nothing but wait till the savoury dish was served. There would be something gained though, I thought; the waiter would be more communicative. So without regret I sat till "one whitebait Number 4" was served, and partook thereof with enjoyment.

"Where does the supply come from?"

"Supply, sir?"

"Yes, the supply. Where do they get the whitebait?"

"Oh, the whitebait, sir? Yessir, *they ketches 'em!*"

I thanked my friend the waiter, and felt disposed, out of spite, to impart the knowledge I had gained from my natural history; but I refrained, and sought elsewhere for information. I sought until I obtained it, of about the wettest, muddiest, slimiest, red nose, most unpleasant specimen of humanity to be found smelling of brackish weed between London Bridge and Gravesend. He was in a boat "doing his pipe," as he termed it, otherwise smoking it, and upon being accosted bestowed a look that was as fishy as his aspect. He was quite ready, though, to talk about whitebait, and came ashore, scraping nothing off his great boots upon the muddy stone stairs, against which Father Thames lapped slimily as he stealthily wound his way amongst the vessels moored head and stern in the pool.

"Whitebait," he said; "yes, I ketches whitebait, and brings 'em up myself. I'm only in a small way. Most on it's caught and sent up by rail in these here."

"These here" were two little flat, shallow, tray-like boxes, the fac-simile of one that I had seen an hour before at a Billingsgate salesman's, full of tiny silvery fish of the length of the little finger, and not distinguishable to common eyes from sprats in a state of infancy.

"Yes; they comes up by rail, them does, and I sends mine so sometimes," said the old fellow, "when I can't get a run up behind

a tug or a steam launch; for, you see, these here whitebait is for the swells, and it's a trade as is done in a hurry. If your little trunk of fish aint up to market early in the morning 'taint no use—they spoil d'reckly. I'm one of the hereglar ones, and I sells here or at Grinnidge or Gravesend, according to how time serves. How do we ketch 'em? Little mashed nets—bag nets. Sets 'em across the water when the tide's coming up or going down, and they swims right into your net and gets into the bag part, and never gets out any more till we take 'em. They swims in schools, you know; comes right up the river, and we gets 'em miles away both sides of Gravesend. They seems, like some men as I knows, to like half-and-half, only they like water—half salt, half fresh; and they may talk as long as they like about what they are, they're only little sprats, and if we left 'em alone they'd grow to big sprats; and I aint sure as big sprats wouldn't get bigger till they got to be herrin's.

"Waries a deal, they do; sometimes we get a rare lot, and sometimes they're skeerce. Pretty well they've been to-day, and they've been selling 'em for two shillin's a quart in the market. Sometimes, though, they're as much as five bob a quart, for swells will have 'em in the season, and there's obliged to be some for 'em. What do I get for 'em? Oh, all sorts of prices—that aint neither here nor there; but if I was to say I had a shillin' a quart for mine all round this mornin' I shouldn't be far out. I've had more'n that afore now, and I aint had half so much; and I have knowed the time when I've had to chuck a lot away—pitched 'em bang into the river, for they turns queer sooner than nothing.

"It's been like this, you see; there's been no chance to get 'em up to London time for the market, and all the places at Woolwich and Blackwall got as much as they want. They won't buy more'n they can do with—you may trust 'em for that; for 'taint a thing as they want to have common and cheap. It's swells' meat, you know, whitebait is, and they like to keep it for swells. They're curus little fishes, though, is whitebait, and the fresh water seems too strong for 'em. Up they comes with the tide, and down they comes with the tide, just as if the fresh water drove 'em back. And they're so ag-gravatin'. Here, say I've got an order for two of them boxes, you'd think I'd only have

to set a net and ketch 'em. Why, bless you, you may set yer nets and row about early in the morning, up and down, and across here and across there, sometimes till you're sick, and not get none. I dessay it's better about Gravesend; but, you see, I work as near London as I can, and get my takes sold at Greenwich and Blackwall, only going down Gravesend way sometimes. If I'd my time to come over again, I'd never take to fishing, for it's the coldest, and wettest, and unsartineest trade under the sun, when there is any, and that aint often for them as fishes, seeing as we do our work in the night and early morning."

There were more boxes of whitebait being received by the salesmen on passing once more through the market, each full of the silvery delicacy, and the brackish old man was right in his quotation of sales, for the whitebait was being disposed of at two shillings a quart. A good look at the tender little leaves of silver—for such they seemed to be—only appeared to confirm the old fisherman's story about their being young sprats, though naturalists would say that this is a vulgar error. At any rate, the supply is small, choice, and, if not rapidly sold, deteriorates so fast that, whether they be a species to themselves, or only fry, fried they never are.

ANGUISH IN PRINT.

IN THE STRICTEST CONFIDENCE.

EDITORIAL.

SHOULD this meet the eye of the fair author of the following pages, the Editor begs to inform her that, in obedience to her wishes, the MS. has been carefully revised, and is now laid before the sympathizing of her sex. Will she kindly call for copies as the "tears" appear, and grant the editor an interview, at which auspicious time he hopes to have the pleasure of returning the stamped leather reticule bag which contained the MS., and in addition a cambric handkerchief marked in red hair A. de C., four skeins of Berlin wool, a tatting shuttle, and a volume of Tennyson, annotated in pencil. These were evidently left unintentionally, and are of no use to any one but the owner.

The original text has been adhered to as far as possible; but it is evident that too pointed a style of caligraphy was favoured at the Cedars, so pointed a style that the

Editor found it utterly impossible to decipher some of the impaled words. However, he has filled up the spaces with the best at his command, and feels convinced that in no case has he departed from the strict meaning of a sentence.

TEAR THE FIRST.

"EXCELSIOR."

THOUGH what the world would call young, my life would fill volumes—thick volumes—with thrilling incidents; but a natural repugnance to publicity forces me to confine myself to the incidents of one single year, whose eventful hours were numbered—whose days were one chaos of excitement or rack of suspense. How are the scenes brought vividly before my mind's eye as I turn over the leaves of my diary, and recognize a tear blister here, a smear there, or find the writing illegible from having been hastily closed when wet, on account of the prying advance of some myrmidon of tyranny when the blotting paper was not at hand. Faces so familiar rise before me, to smile or frown, as my associations with them were grave or gay. Now I shudder, now I thrill with pleasure; now it is a frown that contracts my brow, now a smile curls my lip; while the tears, "Oh, ye tears!"—by the way, it is irrelevant, but I have the notes of a poem on tears, a subject not yet hackneyed, while it seems to me to be a theme that flows well—"tears, fears, leers, jeers," and so on. Oh, if I had only possessed yellow hair and violet eyes, and determination, what I might have been! If I had only entered this great world as one of those delicious heroines, so masculine, so superior, that our authors vividly paint—although they might be engravings, they are so much alike. If I had but stood with flashing eyes a Lady Audley, a Mrs. Armistage, the heroine of "Falkner Lyle," or any other of those charming creatures, I could have been happy in defying the whips and stings, and all that sort of thing; but now, alas! alack!—ah, what do I say?—my heart is torn, wrecked, crushed. Hope is dead and buried; while love—ah, me! But I will not anticipate. I pen these lines solely to put forth my claims for the sympathy of my sex, which will, I am sure, with one heart, throb and bleed for my sorrows. That my readers may never need a similar expression of sympathy is the fond wish of a wrecked heart.

I am now eighteen, and dwelling in a wilderness—Chester-square is where papa's residence (town residence) is situated. But it is a wilderness to me. The flowers coaxed by the gardener to grow in the square garden seem tame in colour and inodorous; the gate gives me a shudder as I pass through, when it grinds with the dust in its hinges, and always loudly; while mischievous boys are constantly inserting small pebbles in the key-hole to break the wards of the key. It is a wilderness to me; and though this heart may become crusted with bitterness, and so hardened and callous, yet never, ah! never, will it be what it was a year ago. I am writing this with a bitter smile upon my lips, which I cannot convey to paper; but I have chosen the hardest and scratchiest pen I could find, I am using red ink, and there are blurs and spots upon the paper* where the tears have removed the glaze—for I always like very highly glazed note.

I did think of writing this diary in my own life's current, but my reason told me that it would only be seen by the blackened and brutal printers; and therefore, as I said before, I am using red ink, and sitting writing by the front drawing-room window, where it is so much lighter, where the different passing vehicles can be seen, and the noise of those horrid men saying "Ciss, ciss" in the mews cannot be heard.

Ah! but one year ago, and I was happy! I recall it as if but yesterday. We were sitting at breakfast, and I remember thinking what a pity it was to be obliged to sit down, and crease and take the stiffening out of the clean muslin I wore, and that really seemed almost perfection as I came downstairs, when suddenly mamma—who was reading that horrible provincial paper that ought to be called the *Réchauffé*, for it never contains anything but what we have had before in a better form—mamma stopped papa just as he had a spoonful of egg up to his lips, and made him start so that he dropped a portion upon his whisker.

"Excelsior!" exclaimed mamma.

"Which is?" said papa, making the table-cloth all yellow.

"Only listen," said mamma, and she commenced reading an atrocious advertisement, while I was so astonished at the unwonted vivacity displayed, that I left off skimming

* Fact. There was considerable difficulty in transcribing.—ED.

the last number of "All the Year Round," and listened as well while she read the following dreadful notice:—

"The Cedars, Allsham.—Educational Establishment for a limited number of young ladies"—(limited to all she could get). "Lady principal, Mrs. Fortesquieu de Blount"—(an old wretch); "French, Monsieur de Cochonet; German, Fraulein Liebeskinden; Italian, Signor Fazzoletto; singing, Fraulein Liebeskinden, R.A.M., and Signor Fazzoletto, R.A.M." (the result of whose efforts was to make us poor victims sing in diphthongs or the union of vowels, Latin and Teutonic); "pianoforte, Fraulein Liebeskinden; dancing and deportment, Monsieur de Kittville; English, Mrs. Fortesquieu de Blount, assisted by fully qualified teachers. This establishment combines the highest educational phases with the comforts of a home"—(Now is it not as wicked to write stories as to say them? Of course it is; and as, according to the paper, their circulation was three thousand a week, and there are fifty-two weeks in a year, that wicked old tabby in that one case told just one hundred and six thousand fibs in the twelvemonth; while if I were to analyze the whole advertisement, comme ça, the amount would be horrible)—"Mrs. Fortesquieu de Blount having made it her study to eliminate every failing point in the older systems of instruction and school internal management, and having formed the present institution upon a basis of the most firm, satisfactory, and lasting character." (Would you think it possible that mammas who pride themselves upon their keenness would be led away and believe such nonsense?) "The staff of assistants has been most carefully selected—the highest testimonials having in every case been considered of little avail, unless accompanied by tangible proof of long and arduous experience."

Such stuff! And then there was ever so much more—and there was quite a quarrel once about paying for the advertisement, it came to so much—about forks and spoons and towels, and advantages of situation in a sanitary point of view, and beauty of scenery, and references to bishops, priests, and deacons, deans and canons, two M.D.s and a Sir Somebody Something, Bart. I won't mention his name, for I'm sure he must be quite sufficiently ashamed of it by

this time, almost as much so as those high and mighty peers who have been cured of their ailments for so many years by the quack medicines. But there, mamma read it all through, every bit, mumbling so dreadfully, as she always has ever since she had those new teeth with the patent base.

"Well, but there isn't anything about excelsior," said papa.

"No, of course not," said mamma. "I meant that it was the very thing for Laura. Finishing, you know."

"Well, it does sound pretty good," said papa.

And then, after a great deal of talking and arguing, in which of course mamma must have it all her own way, and me not consulted a bit, they settled that mamma was to write to Allsham, and then if the letter in reply proved satisfactory, she was to go down and see the place; when, if she liked it, I was to spend a year there for a finishing course of education; for they would not call it—as I spitefully told papa they ought to—they would not call it sending me back to school; and it was too bad, after promising that the two years I passed in the convent at Guisnes should be the last.

And besides, I could not help it if my grammar was what papa called, in his slangy way, "horribly slack." I never did like that horrid parsing, and I'm sure it comes fast enough with reading. Sœur Celine never found fault with my French grammatical construction when I wrote letters to her, and I wrote one that very day; for it did seem such a horrid shame to treat me in so childish a way. And while I was writing—or rather, while I was sitting at the window, thinking of what to say, and biting the end of my pen—who should come by but the new curate, Mr. St. Purre, of St. Vestment's; and when he saw how bitter and touched I looked, he raised his hat with such a sad smile, and passed on.

By the way, what an improvement it is, the adoption of the beard in the church. Mr. St. Purre's is one of the most beautiful black, glossy, silky beards ever seen; and I'm sure I thought so then, when I was writing about going back to school—a horrible, hateful place! How I bit my lips and shook my head! I could have cried with vexation, but I would not let a soul see it; for there are some things to which I could not stoop. While, after the first unavailing remonstrance, if it had been to

send me to school for life, I would not have said another word.

If it had been a ball, or a party, or fête, the time would have gone on drag, drag, dawdle, dawdle, for long enough. But because I was going back to school it must rush along like an express train. First, there were the answers back to mamma's letters, written upon such stiff thick paper that it broke all along the folds; scented, and with a twisty, twirly monogram thing done in blue upon paper and envelope; while the writing—supposed to be Mrs. de Blount's, though it was not, for I soon found that out, and that it was written, like all the particular letters, by Miss Furness—was of the finest and most delicate, so fine that it seemed as if it was never meant to be read, but only to be looked at, like a great many more ornamental things we see every day done up in the disguise of something useful.

Well, there were the letters answered, mamma had been and declared to papa that she was perfectly satisfied, for everything was as it should be, and nothing seemed *outré*—that being a favourite word of mamma's, and one out of the six French expressions she remembers, while it tumbles into all sorts of places in conversation where it has no business. I did tell her, though, it seemed *outré* to send me back to one of those terrible child prisons, crushing down my young elastic soul in so cruel a way; but she only smiled, and said that it was all for my good. And then came the day all in a hurry; and I'm sure, if it was possible, that day had come out of its turn, and pushed and elbowed its way into the front on purpose to make me miserable.

But there it was, whether or no; and I'd been packing my boxes—first a dress, then a tear, then another dress, and then another tear, and so on, until they were full—John said too full, and that I must take something out or they would not lock; but there was not a single thing that I could possibly have done without, so Mary and Eliza both had to come and stand upon the lid, and then it would not go quite close, when mamma came fussing in to say how late it was, and she stood on as well; so that there were three of them, like the Graces upon a square pedestal. But we managed to lock it then; and John was cording it with some new cord, only he left that one, because mamma said perhaps they had all better stand on the

other box, in case it would not lock; while, when they were busy about number two, if number one did not go off "bang," like a great wooden shell, and burst the lock off, when we had to be content with the cords.

Nobody minded my tears—not a bit; and there was the cab at the door at last, and the boxes lumbered down into the hall, and then bumped up, as if they wanted to break them, on to the roof of the cab; and mamma all the while in a regular knot trying to understand "Bradshaw" and the table of the Allsham and Funnleton Railway. Papa had gone to the City, and said good-bye directly after breakfast; and when mamma and I went out, the first thing mamma must do was to take out her little china tablets and pencil, and put down the cabman's number, when if the odious, low wretch did not actually wink at me—such insolence!

When we reached the station, if my blood did not quite boil when mamma would stop and haggle with the horrible tobaccoey wretch about sixpence of the fare, till there was quite a little crowd, when the money was paid, and the tears brought into my eyes by being told that the expenses of my education necessitated such parsimony; and that, too, at a time when I did not wish for a single fraction of a penny to go down to that dreadful woman at Allsham. But that was always the way; and some people are only too glad to make excuses and lay their meannesses upon some one else. Of course, I am quite aware that it is very shocking to speak of mamma in this way; but then some allowance must be made for my wretched feelings, and, besides, I don't mean any harm.

TEAR THE SECOND.

THE CEDARS, ALLSHAM.

I SINCERELY hope the readers of all this do not expect to find any plot or exciting mystery; because, if they do, they will be most terribly disappointed, since I am not leading them into the realms of fiction. No lady is going to be poisoned; there is no mysterious murder; neither bigamy, trigamy, nor quadrigamy; in fact, not a single gamy in the book, though once bordering upon that happy state. Somebody does not turn out to be somebody else, and anybody is not kept out of his rightful property by a false heir, any more than a dreadfully good man's wife runs away from him with a very wicked *roué*, gets injured in a railway acci-

dent, and then comes back to be governess to her own children, while her husband does not know her again. Oh, no! there is no excitement of that kind, nothing but a twelve-month's romance of real life; the spreading of the clouds of sorrow where all was sunshine; the descent of a bitter blight, to eat into and canker a young rosebud. But there, I won't be poetical, for I am not making an album.

I was too much out of humour, and too low-spirited, to be much amused with the country during my journey down; while as to reading the sort of circular thing about the Cedars and the plan of operations during the coming session, now about to commence, I could not get through the first paragraph; but every time I looked up, there was a dreadful foreign-looking man with his eyes fixed upon me, though he pretended to be reading one of those Windsor-soap-coloured paper-covered *Chemin-de-Fer* novels, by Edmond About, that one buys on the French railways. Of course we should not have been subjected to that annoyance—shall I call it so?—only mamma must throw the expenses of my education at my head, and more; and say it was necessary we should travel second class, though I'm sure papa would have been terribly angry had he known. I had my tatting with me, and took it out when I laid the circular aside; but it was always the same—look up when I would, there were his sharp, dark, French-looking eyes fixed upon me; while I declare if it did not seem that in working my pattern I was forming a little cotton lace framework to so many bright, dark eyes, which kept on peering out at me, till the man shouted out "Allsham, Allsham," where the stranger also descended and watched us into the station fly.

Mamma said that if we came down second class, we would go up to the Cedars in a decent form; and we did, certainly, in one of the nastiest, stably-smelling, dusty, jangling old flies I was ever in. The window would not stop up on the dusty side, while on the other it would not let down; and I told mamma we might just as well have brought the trunks with us, and not left them for the station people to send, for all the difference it would have made. But mamma knew best, of course, and it was no use for me to speak.

But I wish to be just; and I must say that the Cedars was a very pretty place to look

at, just outside Allsham town; though of course its prettiness was only for an advertisement, and not to supply home comfort to the poor little prisoners within. We entered by a pair of large iron gates, while upon the pillars on either side were owls, with outstretched wings—put there, of course, to remind parents of the goddess Minerva; but we all used to say that they were likenesses of Mrs. Blount and the Fraulein. There was a broad gravel sweep up to the portico, while in front was a beautiful velvet lawn and a couple of cedar trees, whose graceful branches swept the grass.

"Mrs. and Miss Bozorne," said mamma to the footman, a nasty tall, thin, straggly young man, with red hair that would not brush smooth, and a freckly face, a horrible caricature of our John, in a drab coat and scarlet plushes, and such thin legs that I could not help a smile. But he was terribly thin altogether, and looked as if he had been a page boy watered till he grew out of knowledge, and too fast; while he clung to the door in such a helpless way, when he let us in, that he seemed afraid to leave it again, lest he should fall.

"This way, ladies," he said, with a laugh-and-water sort of a smile; and he led us across a handsome hall, where there were four statues and a great celestial globe hanging from the ceiling—only the globe hanging; though I'm sure it would have been a charity and release for some young people if a few of the muses had shared the fate of the globe—at all events, that four. First and foremost of all was Clio. I wish she had been turned into a date tree!

"This way, ladies," said the tall creature, saving himself once more from tripping over, by seizing the drawing-room door handle, and then, as he turned and swung by it, sending the blood tingling into my cheeks by announcing—

"Mrs. and Miss Bosom."

TABLE TALK.

IMPROVEMENTS in the City advance slowly but surely: Victoria-street will in time be really magnificent, Ludgate-hill greatly altered for the better, and the Circus at its foot noble in the altitude and structure of its houses. Not the least noteworthy of the streets is that of St. Bride, running from Circus to Circus; and the Corporation of

London is indebted to one firm for the enterprise which has raised there a quaint, old style, red brick structure, which is in its way a perfect gem.

HERE IS A picture of the town which has just fallen to our arms. There can surely be few who do not rejoice at the destruction of such a savage den:—"A town over which the smell of death hangs everywhere, and pulsates on each sickly breath of wind—a town where, here and there, a vulture hops at one's very feet, too gorged to join the filthy flock preening itself on the gaunt dead trunks that line the road; where blood is plastered, like a pitch coating, over trees, and floors, and stools—blood of a thousand victims, yearly renewed; where headless bodies make common sport; where murder pure and simple, monotonous massacre of bound men, is the one employment of the King and the one spectacle of the populace. At every shuddering breath the stomach turns, so pestilential is the air; but in this atmosphere the inhabitants pass their life. They eat heartily whilst human blood streams down the street, whilst bodies unburied bleach and swell before their eyes. The child does not shrink as the executioners pass by; the bride turns not an inch away from her path to avoid a festering corpse. Verily this is the metropolis of murder. The odour of putridity is the air approved by its inhabitants. The sight they love is severed necks, and spouting blood, and corpses that line the road in a dead procession. Their houses are built to command the widest views. They are stained red, that the colour of blood may always rejoice their eyes. Beside the doors, and along the stucco friezes, one group is never absent—a fantastic figure flourishing his knife over a helpless victim. Murder is their delight, their joy. Though the empire be tottering under the incessant drain, though their own lives are not worth an hour's purchase, the appetite will not be restrained. Children and slaves, which make their savage wealth, are sacrificed with glee to keep up the show. Nowhere are so many dead trees, poisoned by the noxious exhalations which these people love to breathe; nowhere is animal life so scant. The pretty lizards which rustle and hunt over every other town have fled this place. Only vultures abound, with sickening tameness, and kites, which swoop

close to the ground with plaintive twittering."

FOR A LONG time past we have given madmen padded rooms in lunatic asylums, with the walls and floors so prepared that they cannot meet with injury. Is it not time then, now, that we should have a quid pro quo?—we say now, meaning these days of railway misadventures. Surely the madmen—we mean the railway directors—might be forced into giving us the locomotive rooms in which we travel so amply padded that we could sit at peace, ready to meet with nonchalance a Flying Dutchman coming full butt at us upon the same line of rails. Seriously, though, cannot some atmospheric break or monster buffer now precede our trains, ready to act as paddy—receive the impact of a collision, and telescope even to pancakeism for the saving of our bones?

PEOPLE OFTEN COMPLAIN of the want of pageantry in our everyday life, talk of the rarity of royal processions, and the general absence of, so-called, "sights." Let each who murmurs place himself, or herself, in the position of the prominent party in these gala days—Queen, Prince, or Princess—and think of the consequences of the collection of a crowd. Take that of March 12th, for instance, and what have we? Rather a sad list: three lives crushed out, and a long array of hospital cases—fractures, concussions, and contusions. The knowledge of that which inevitably follows a public entry must jar painfully upon any thoughtful mind, and make its owner feel disposed always to adopt privacy, sooner than in a long lifetime be the cause of a single death.

SUCCESS HAS ATTENDED the dramatization of "Ready-money Mortiboy," which is spoken of most highly by the various critics. Certainly the acting is in parts admirable. The old Miser of Mr. Clifford Cooper, the son of Mr. George Rignold, and the Polly of Miss Marie Henderson, are sufficient in themselves to carry the play to a successful issue.

All Contributions are attentively considered, and unaccepted MSS. are returned on receipt of stamps for postage; but the Editor cannot hold himself responsible for any accidental loss. No unaccepted MSS. will be returned until a written application has been made for them.

ONCE A WEEK

NEW SERIES.

No. 326.

March 28, 1874.

Price 2d.

JACK'S SISTER; OR, WOMANLY PAST QUESTION.

CHAPTER XX.
BAD NEWS FROM OXFORD.



"N I D, come here."

It was Mr. Leyburn's voice; and Enid, who was coming downstairs, singing softly to herself some old Scottish lilt of which Clifton had been fond, and swinging the keys in her hand as a sort of gentle accompaniment, started, and felt

the clear, crisp autumn air grow raw and damp in one moment, as though a bleak November fog had wrapt itself around her warm young body.

Surely father's voice sounded very strange!

She went into the study with an unconscious tremble in her limbs, a sudden chill in her healthy blood, which underwent no change at the sight of her father's stern and iron-bound expression. He did not even move when she went up to him and kissed him—only returned her salute with a brief "good morning," and tossing her a letter from a pile which lay beside him, added as briefly—

"Read that, and tell me what it contains."

"From Merle?"

The words escaped her in simple wonder

at her father's tone as connected with so ordinary a matter as Merle's letters. An impatient nod answered her; and standing by his side, she opened the missive and read aloud.

"DEAREST ENID—You will, I know, be as sorry to hear as I to write that—"

"Well? go on," cried Mr. Leyburn.

Enid had come to a dead stop, her face quite pale and sorrowful.

"What do you stop for?" the banker asked, angrily. "Read on, I tell you. Let us hear how prettily the young blackguard puts it."

"Oh, papa! why call him that?" cried Enid, aghast at such an epithet. "I'm very sorry; and of course it's a great disappointment to him, and all of us, poor fellow! But he can't help it, and is—"

"Can't help it! What on earth do you mean?"

"After all, dear papa, you know how hard he has tried; and if he has lost this time, it is his misfortune, not his fault. He can try to—"

"Misfortune! What, in the name of Heaven, do you mean? Not his fault! If you call getting into debt to the amount of three hundred and fifty pounds not his fault, I should like to know whose it is. Pray, did you know of this before?"

"Debts, papa!" Enid echoed, thunder-struck on her side; "I—I don't know what you mean. I was speaking of poor Merle having failed to pass in his examinations this term."

Mr. Leyburn dashed his fist on the table with something so like an oath, that his daughter gave an involuntary start and shiver.

"So he has failed too, has he? This shining light, who was to make us all feel dunces! this talented poet of yours, who can afford to make ducks and drakes of his uncle's money, and come home every vaca-

tion with as smooth a face as if he had saved sixpence out of every shilling—the hypocritical young swindler! Failed, too, has he? I like that; and you always exalting him over our poor Jack, who never said a word in his own praise, but went in quietly and took a— Pshaw! It's like the stock he came from. What can you expect from the son of a man who stole his rector's favourite daughter, and a woman who deceived her own father and sister? Blackguard!"

"Father, that is not fair," Enid said, her voice sweet as honey, but firm as a rock. "If Merle has done wrong, we cannot blame his parents' training for it. Please don't be so angry, father"—the honey predominating—"but tell me all about it. Is Merle in debt?"

And the young woman sat down close to the old banker's side, and put her hand in his, as deprecating further wrath.

"Done! What, do you mean to say he hasn't confessed it even to you?"

"Only the being ploughed in—in—" faltered Enid, feeling as if she must begin to cry at the idea that Merle had not confessed his sin, whatever it might be, to her.

"Ploughed be hanged! Take this. A nice letter to get from a dirty Jew broker. The idle, deceitful young—"

"Father, dear, don't. I can't understand."

Poor child! She meant to say that she couldn't bear to hear her idol abused.

"Then, my dear, you must be as great an idiot, begging your pardon, as your precious cousin. Ploughed, indeed! But I never expected anything else."

He had, of course, and so had Enid—something so different that, try as hard as she might, one big tear *would* roll down her cheek, and was quickly followed by another.

Oh, gay and giddy Oxonians, do you ever think of the bitter disappointment, the tears of sorrow and mortification, which your idleness and dissipation are preparing for the women who love you at home? Little enough, I fear me, or such tears would far more rarely stain cheeks which were rather made for smiles and dimples.

Worse than any trouble of her own since her mother's death was this failure of Merle's to Enid Leyburn; and yet she dared not let more than those two tears escape, because she felt that there was yet worse behind. What that worse was Mr. Leyburn

soon showed her. In a voice choked with passion, he read aloud a letter from a certain Mr. Elias Abrahams, money-lender, of Oxford town, who, before accepting Mr. Kinnardson's note of hand for twenty pounds, wished to ascertain if that gentleman were really a wealthy ward of Mr. Leyburn, the banker, he (Abrahams) having discovered that Mr. Kinnardson was in debt to at least the sum of £350 among the tradespeople of the city, who had allowed his accounts to run on under that supposition. There was a good deal more in the letter about Mr. Abrahams' dislike to making these inquiries at all, about the scarcity of money in the market, about his not acting for himself in the matter, and his high admiration for Mr. Kinnardson's good qualities; but the uncle of that young man got no further in his reading than the business part, going off instead into a fresh burst of rage at the sound of his own voice reciting such iniquities aloud. Enid sat silent, with her hands clasped on her knee, too stunned even for comment. You might have thought, from her attitude, that she was the guilty person; but indeed I think it would have been a great comfort to her could that have been proved to be the case, and her cousin exonerated.

When she did speak, it was in a voice so low and broken as to be almost unintelligible.

"Poor, poor Merle! No wonder he has looked so ill and wretched these many months."

"No wonder!" repeated Mr. Leyburn, angrily. "But no, nothing is a wonder to you. I believe you would make a hero of that young scoundrel if he had cut your father's throat. A nice fool you have made of him with your constant flattering of his absurd vanity, and encouraging his ridiculous, extravagant, nonsensical tastes, and tomfooleries."

It was quite a comfort to Mr. Leyburn to have found some one actually present to receive the scolding from which Merle was exempted by his absence; and having made up his mind that Enid was the proper person for this jobation, he proceeded to punish her in a speech ten minutes long, and increasing in severity with every ten words. And Enid said nothing at all in interruption, only sat with bent head, thankful that the storm had been diverted from the real culprit, and shedding quiet tears

over the absent sinner who had brought it upon her.

The breakfast bell rang twice before Mr. Leyburn had done, but its summons met no response; and presently Aunt Jane's knuckles were audible in a bony rapping at the door, and her voice, also bony and out of joint from having been kept waiting, asked—

"Brother, is Enid here? Are you coming to breakfast, or has anything happened?"

"One moment, one moment, Jane," Mr. Leyburn answered, sharply; adding in an undertone, "A nice appetite for breakfast my family give me."

"Father, I am very sorry," Enid said, putting her hands on his shoulders as he stood up, and raising her tearful eyes to his face.

"Pshaw! my dear. It is not your fault."

He had been telling her that it was, all this while; but the best of men will say a great many things which they do not care to repeat with a pair of loving, wistful eyes looking straight into theirs. These never wavered, and the clinging hands kept their place while his daughter went on pleading—

"Yes, father, I think it was. You said so, and you ought to know." Did the artful young woman see her advantage here? "It was my encouragement of Merle's tastes which made him so eager about them. I spurred him on to do too much, and he tried very hard, poor boy! and—and I suppose he couldn't do everything, and got into debt over his publications without thinking, and——"

"And thought to hide it from me, instead of coming to me like Jack, and telling me honestly all about it. But there, I've done with him. Let him 'fend' for himself in the future," put in Mr. Leyburn.

"Jack is your son, papa," said Enid, softly. "Yes, and your favourite. That is but natural, when he is the only one; but it is natural, too, that Merle should feel it, and not like to come to you with faults which he knew would make you very angry for a long time, and which I am sure, quite sure, he hoped and intended to repair."

"You don't seem to care much about my anger, my dear, or you wouldn't stand here wasting my time by trying to argue that this young scoundrel is a saint."

"Father! But no, I don't care what hard things you say to me. You do not

mean them, and I know you love me. You don't love Merle, papa, not nearly as much—at least——"

"I should think not. Puny young hypocrite! Not even one's own flesh and blood; and spending my children's money on his luxurious fiddle-faddles."

"Not our money, papa—yours; and you know you would have given it to him if mother had asked you. Father, dear, *she* loved him so much."

"There, there, let it alone. I am not angry with you;" and Mr. Leyburn tried, though gently, to remove five white fingers from his shoulders. They held their ground, however, and linked themselves with another five behind his neck. Oh, gay and giddy Oxonians, do you ever think, while smarting under the paternal rebukes, what gentle lips have pleaded, what tender hearts have bled for their remission?

"Father, dear father, you know you would; and, if so, be kinder still, and forgive him for having spent it without telling you. For mother's sake, dear papa. Think how ill and miserable he has looked these many months, and how the weight of this on his conscience has even made him fail in those examinations where he had so counted on success. That is almost punishment enough in itself. And oh! father, you forgave Jack once—you forgave me just now, though you said it was my fault—because we are your children, and you love us. Poor Merle stands all alone. Don't make him feel that he is more harshly dealt with than those to whom God has been more indulgent."

"Has anything happened?" asked Aunt Jane, more bonily than before, from the passage; "or is any one coming in to breakfast? The tea is quite cold, and my toast like a slice of leather; but of course that is no consequence, none at all."

"Go to your breakfast, my dear," said Mr. Leyburn, "and don't cry so;" lifting the girl's head from his breast, and kissing her. "Stay—wait one moment, Enid. You intimated just now that Merle not being my son, I am inclined to be unjust to him."

"Father! Indeed I never meant——"

"Hush, my dear; you said it, and I do not say you were wrong. Therefore I promise you that I will consider this matter as impartially as though he were my son who had so sinned. Had Jack got into debt, idled—as Merle with his talents must have idled—and deceived me from first to last,

trading on my name and abusing my confidence, I could not on principle pass over it.

"No, papa."

Enid's voice was very low.

"Remember, too, he has not confessed it yet. I have found him out from a dirty Jew broker. Now, I shall write to him and desire him to come home at once, and explain this letter from Mr. Abraham, or whatever the fellow's confounded name is. If your cousin has any excuses to offer for his deceit and dishonesty, he can make them in person. I shall do nothing rashly, I promise you."

"Perhaps you would like your breakfast in here," suggested Aunt Jane from the passage, in tones sharper than her own elbows. "Don't consider me, I beg."

"Certainly not," answered her brother, shortly, though whether in answer to the first or second proposition doth not appear.

"Go to her, Enid."

"And you, papa?"

Enid's pleading was done. When Mr. Leyburn spoke in that tone, woman's tact told her that woman's tongue must cease.

"Tell the maid to bring me a cup of coffee. No, nothing to eat. I am not hungry, and must go to the bank as soon as I have written to Merle and this Jew fellow."

He took up his pen as he spoke, and Enid went quietly away. She had done her best. The remainder lay beyond the reach of her hands, and she could only pray it might end well. All this time she had not had one moment to think over the blow this had been to *her*; and yet it was a blow, bitter and crushing, grieving her to the very bottom of her soul. It was not the debt, though that was bad enough, but the concealment. He might have told her, even if he had been afraid to tell his uncle; and ah! if he only had, how she would have exerted her influence to make him put all square at once, and so avert the possibility of what had now happened. Surely she must have failed grievously in her mission to have forfeited his confidence so entirely. And yet he often spoke as though he had not a secret in the world from her.

How could he!

A faint spark of anger kindled in the sorrowful heart, and brought a little flush of colour to the wet cheek. Straightway Merle's pale, anxious face and frequent self-accusations of unworthiness rose up before her

and blotted it out. No; if all others turned against him, she could not—her poor, lonely boy.

"Perhaps, Enid, you forget that you have not seen me before, this morning," said Aunt Jane, in reproving tones, as the girl entered the room slowly, and with her mind far away. "Of course I have no wish to pry into your private affairs; but, if I may be allowed a remark, I should wish to observe that it is hardly in accordance with the commonest rules of civility and good breeding to allow an elderly lady, and your father's sister, too, to remain twirling her thumbs in solitude from nine o'clock to half-past ten, and without even the bare ceremony of an apology when you do appear."

There are circumstances when a greeting like this might have prompted many girls, and not bad ones either, to answer crossly or pertly. Even Enid, serene-tempered by Nature, and reared in the old-fashioned doctrines of respect for age be it never so aggravating, felt her sorrow rankled into irritation by the interruption of small, formal fault-finding when her every pulse was quivering under a first great trouble, and would gladly have gone breakfastless so she might have run away to her own room in search of solitude and peace. Honest Leyburn justice, however, intervened, and showed her that poor Aunt Jane was herself rankling under three injuries. First, the being kept waiting for her breakfast an hour and a half, never a pacifying experience to any one, old or young. Secondly, the being left to prepare it for herself in reality as well as fancy, which was inconsiderate and disrespectful. Thirdly and chiefly, the being excluded from a confidence shared between her brother and his daughter—kept out of a secret, in fact; for of course she assumed, first that there was a secret, and next that she was to be kept out of it—a crime than which there is none blacker in the eyes of spinsters past their prime, but not past their curiosity. Alas! when is a woman past that? This crowning evil was now additionally aggravated by the double fact that Enid's eyes, so clear and calm by nature, were swollen with crying, and that she had not hurried in, eager to make up for previous shortcomings by flinging herself on her aunt's bosom, and inviting her also to weep over the misfortune, whatever it might be, which had so evidently occurred. Was not Aunt Jane quite ready to weep? Ready! why,

she was eager, even now, to forget her wrongs, put aside her untasted breakfast, and shed any amount of sympathetic tears her niece might require. Enid, however, required nothing of the sort; wherefore, as a natural and moral sequence, Miss Leyburn became more injured and acrimonious than before, and went on to observe—

"I never ask questions, my dear; therefore, should your father require no breakfast this morning, I must be excused for pouring out his coffee in ignorance of that fact. Of course it is as cold as ice. As that is owing, however, to no one having had the civility to tell me that breakfast was postponed till nearly noon to-day, I can hardly stoop—humble as my position here seems to be—to apologize for the circumstance."

"I am very sorry that you were kept waiting, auntie," began Enid; who, having tried vainly to edge in a word before, and being summarily waved into silence, had been busy fighting down the irritated feeling before mentioned. "I was in the study with papa, and—"

"No, Enid. No, my dear. Not a word, I beg, of where you were, or in what engaged. Sorry, indeed, should I be to force a confidence which has been voluntarily withheld—I who am considered as less than nothing in this house, although I have sacrificed everything—my home, my friends, indeed my whole life—to the comfort of its inmates. Ah, well! experience is a bitter teacher, and— If you are offering me the toast, Enid, in order to silence me, I must disappoint you, not being able to eat stale food even at your desire. Indeed, it would be more honest to say out, plainly, 'Hold your tongue, Aunt Jane,' than to make—"

"But, indeed, dear auntie, I don't want you to hold your tongue," cried Enid, pitifully. "How can you think me so rude and ungrateful? I was just going to tell you—"

"Tell me nothing, my dear," Miss Leyburn interrupted, coldly. "Whatever my faults may be, I thank Heaven"—with a slight shiver of emotion—"no one could ever accuse me of inquisitiveness. No, my dear, I wish to know nothing of your affairs; and only venture to remark, that if the family is ruined, it will be well to give your servants a month's warning, and so be spared the extra expense of—"

"But we are not, auntie," cried Enid, half laughing, half crying. "It is only—"

"My dear! I beg— Perhaps, however, I had better suggest that, should your father have been taken dangerously ill, it would be advisable not to stand idling here, but send for Dr. Pepsine as soon as possible."

Miss Leyburn's "humble suggestions" were very awful. They would have conquered many a temper. Enid, seeing the danger, took hers by the bit, and conquered it. Waiting till her aunt was silent, she answered very gently, but with a deliberateness which forbade interruption—

"You are too anxious for us, auntie. Nothing so bad has happened, and I am sorry to have made breakfast so late; but you must please forgive me, for we got the news this morning that Merle had failed to pass those examinations, and of course it is a great disappointment to both papa and me."

Not with all her anxiety to soothe Miss Leyburn, could Enid bear to allude to that greater disappointment which Merle had inflicted on them; but her lips would quiver at the recollection, and Aunt Jane resented it.

"Nothing worse than *that!*" she exclaimed, contemptuously. "Well, my dear, I never thought you were very sensible; but I did not imagine you weak enough to make all this fuss, crying and putting everything out because of a trifle which anybody with a grain of sense must have foreseen from the beginning. That young man's whole existence is a failure. How could his examinations be anything else?"

Enid did feel angry now, and held her peace; though her cheek flushed a little when Miss Leyburn went on to remark, satirically, on her brother being too much overcome by his weak-minded nephew's idleness to come into breakfast.

"Is he crying too?" Aunt Jane asked; and when Enid went on eating her breakfast in silence, she added that she did think her niece had outgrown childish sullenness, and began her own meal.

Probably it was the want of food which had so much upset Miss Leyburn's temper. At any rate, the latter improved with every mouthful; and, becoming quite chatty and agreeable by and by, she reminded Enid that it was her day at the schools, and that she had promised Lady Crawford to be friendly to that poor, silly little Mrs. Lovejoy.

"And then, dear, when that is over, you may take me a drive in your pony-chair to Bibchester, to call on the Dean's new wife."

Ah, dear! what a weary day it was to get through, and how bravely Enid set about it, fulfilling all her tasks with smiling equanimity, not venturing even to look grave, lest she should draw fresh attention to Merle's misdemeanours; and yet so sad at heart that every cheerful word and glance was an effort. She did not so much as get time to read her cousin's letter, the first lines of which had only caught her eye, until after starting for the schools—a new institution, for the benefit of the outlying colony of navvies and their families beyond the railway station. Mr. Leyburn had given the land and buildings, and the School Board had sent for a "trained" young woman from London; but the latter, however well up in the "three R's," had proved utterly incompetent to cope with the roughness of her pupils, and was only too glad of the assistance given by Mr. and Mrs. Lovejoy and Miss Leyburn junior to her efforts.

Pacing along the steep and winding road which led up to this remote settlement without passing through the town, Enid perused her letter with many tears over the utter dejection and mortification expressed in every word, and the repeated adjurations that she would keep the news to herself till some favourable moment before the end of term; as, if the vacations were to be made additionally miserable to him by black looks and reproaches, he would not come home at all. And she had blurted it out at the very moment when Mr. Leyburn was worst prepared! No wonder her voice shook when she stopped to speak to a ragged urchin, who scampered up to her with a bunch of late wild flowers gathered from the hedge at the roadside; or that her eyes were still red when she shook hands with Mrs. Lovejoy, who was discovered taking off her husband's overcoat in the ante-room, and kissing the back of his Roman collar at the same time, to the intense delight of two or three rough-headed peepers through the crack of the school-room door. No wonder, too, that she looked very pale and tired when she drove Aunt Jane home in the evening from an excursion in which that good lady talked of little but her brother's folly in keeping Merle at an expensive college when he might have been sent to one of those convenient places, where young men with a necessity

for the clerical profession and a vocation for being plucked can scratch through sufficient divinity to get ordained, and probably do their parish duties just as well as those fellow-clergymen who look down on them for not having an University B.A. or M.A. tacked on to their names.

Enid's first question on reaching home was for her father, and her heart sank when she heard he had been in, but had gone out again, saying he might be late for dinner. She would have given a great deal to see him first, and judge whether anger or pardon was predominant. As it was, Aunt Jane would be present, and sure to throw her weight into the former scale.

The darkest hour is ever before the dawn, and comfort was nigher than Enid hoped. Even as she was dressing for dinner, a thundering knock at the hall door, followed by much stamping and banging and the sound of a well-known voice, startled her from her musings; and hurrying downstairs she nearly fell over a huge portmanteau, and was only saved by being caught on Jack's stalwart arm.

CHAPTER XXI.

THE PRODIGAL'S RETURN.

"WHY, Jack, you dear boy, what wind has blown you home so soon?"

"Soon? Are you sorry to see me, then?"

"Didn't I say a good wind? I meant it. Oh, Jack, I'm more than glad to have you back!"

"What has been the matter?" asked Jack, looking at her with a change in his more than usually beaming expression. "You've been crying. Is my father ill?"

"Oh, no, all are well; but— Come up to your room, Jack. It's quite ready; though we didn't expect you so soon. Jane, here's Master Jack back, you see. Will you carry up his portmanteau?"

"Bring me some hot water, Jane," put in Jack. "I'll manage the bag. It's too heavy for girls' wrists. Now, Enid," when they had got into his room, and he had banged the portmanteau on to the top of his neat feather bed, "what's wrong with you? You look quite ill, child."

"I'm not ill, Jack; only so grieved about Merle."

And Enid burst into her story, softening all the bad points in womanly fashion, and enlarging on Merle's misery and remorse,

amid frequent interruptions, such as the arrival of the hot water, and the blowing and splashing of her brother as he sluiced his face and hands free from railway dust and gravel. She had almost talked the tears into her eyes again when she had done; and was quite surprised at Jack's coolness, as he said, with his head in the towel that she handed him—

"Well, I don't see that it's such an awful calamity, after all. He'll pass next time, I suppose; and as to his debts—"

"That is much the worst," sighed Enid. "If he had only told!"

"Yes; there's what I never can stomach in Merle," said Jack, taking up a brush, and beginning a wild attack on his close-cropped locks. "That confounded way he has of hiding up everything, and playing the good boy. It's what the Yankees call right down mean; and I don't wonder the governor is put out about it."

"He is worse than put out," Enid answered, flinching all the more under Jack's censure that she had nothing to urge against it. "You know how angry he can be; and I fear Merle's knowledge of it made him afraid to speak while he had a chance of retrieving his position."

"Retrieving—gammon! Why couldn't he have made a clean breast to me," waving his brush in the air, "instead of making believe to be all square? I can't stand sneaks."

"You and he have so little in common, you know," urged Enid, avoiding the orbit of the brush, which was watery. "I do wish he had told me that—"

"Now, don't be unreasonable, Enid," said her brother, reprovingly, as he unbuckled his portmanteau. "You're just like all women. As if men could go talking of their business matters to you! Why, the idea is absurd on the face of it."

"Why, Jack?"

"Why! Now, my dear girl, the fact of your asking why is the very reason you want. Because you can't understand, and you only make mischief when you attempt it."

"But family matters, Jack. Surely I can understand them?"

"Yes, when they're not important. You girls do very well as long as you don't try to go beyond your depth. If you do, you only get into a muddle, and make your head ache. Here's a present for you," dis-

tingering a triumph of wood-carving, in the shape of a dove, holding a spray of lilies in its beak, and designed as a candlestick.

Enid went into raptures.

"Oh, Jack, it is perfect! And how good of you to think of me!"

"I saw a shop full of them, and afterwards Ba—a friend of mine—was buying one"—Jack's face was very red, probably from stooping—"and I thought they were just the sort of gimcracks girls like, and got you one. I didn't choose it, she did, so don't give me the credit."

"How kind! And what good taste she had! What was her name, Jack?"

"Delamayne," growled Jack, redder than ever, and not wishing to give his news to any one before his father had sanctioned it. "Here's something for Aunt Jane," turning from the subject to hold up a large and particularly ugly mosaic brooch, and adding with some pride—"I chose that."

"You never forget any one. Aunt will be so pleased," said Enid, taking refuge in praise of Jack from her inability to praise the brooch. "But listen, dear. You will speak a word for Merle if papa asks your advice, won't you?"

"He isn't likely to do so."

"But if he does?"

"Why, Enid, one would think the dear old governor was an ogre. I'm sure he let me off easy enough when I went over the line that first year."

"You are not Merle," said Enid, with sage despondency; "and anyhow, he has not your prospects, poor boy. Oh! Jack, I can't bear to think of his coming home and finding no welcome, nothing but gloom and anger, when he is already so cast down; and only six weeks to Christmas, too! Do be a dear, good fellow, and persuade papa to forgive him. I know his debts are very heavy—more than three hundred pounds, I believe; but we are so well off, we could spare that; and I do believe to treat him generously is the best way to keep him from ever sinning that way again. Look, Jack, I'll give you his letter, so you may see how broken-hearted the poor boy is about the examinations alone."

And taking the missive from her pocket, she handed it to her brother.

"Which he wouldn't thank you for," remarked that young man, with more acumen than might have been expected from him. "It's the only quality Merle has which

would fit him for a business man, he's so deucedly careful about his letters. One would think he was ashamed of his correspondence."

"I am not," said Enid; who was, indeed, rather proud of it, thinking Merle's letters perfect marvels of wit and wisdom. "But read it, do, Jack, and I am sure you will feel as sorry for him as I do."

Seating himself astride on the foot of his bed, Jack complied; and I suppose the contrast between his good spirits and sunshiny prospects and the writer's evident depression and bitterness of soul touched a soft corner in the senior cousin, for he whistled softly to himself as he waded through the blurred scrawl, and when he had done, handed it back with a sort of gruffly reluctant—

"Poor little chap! He does seem awfully down on his luck. How soon do you expect him here?"

"To-morrow morning, some time or another. Papa wrote to bid him come home at once, and explain that horrid letter of Abrahams'."

"*That* vile little Jew? I know him. Middlemist got into his fist once, and I had to help him out. It's lucky for Merle that the old file suspected he had no assets to borrow on; for once in old Abrahams' clutches and your friends may sing the 'requiescat in pace' over you."

"And you will speak for Merle, then, if father asks you, Jack, dear?"

"Look here, Enid," said Jack, standing up, and driving his hands into his trousers pockets to imply the deliberation with which he was about to speak. "If you mean, will I ask my father to pay this £300—little scamp! however did he spend it?—and not say a word to Merle on the subject, I won't; and, what's more, if I did, the governor wouldn't be fool enough to hear me out. You women won't understand such things; but can't you see that it would be wrong to pass over an affair like this without a word? and neither Merle nor I (if I were in his place) would be a bit grateful to the governor if he were soft enough to do so."

"But, Jack—"

"Yes, Enid, it would be softness, and nothing else—not any kindness to do a fellow real good. You girls," looking down patronizingly at his sister, who stood meekly before him, "haven't got any sense of

justice in you. All you think about is—are you fond of a fellow? If you are, he may cut his grandmother's throat, and you'll kiss and cry over him. If you're not, and he tread on the edge of your flounces, you call out to have him sent to Jericho. *We* are different. *We* think of the right and the wrong of the matter, and father and I—yes, and Merle too—know that as he has chosen to go out of bounds he must suffer for it."

"Jack, you're very hard," said Enid, quite crushed by this stern young moralist.

"No, I'm not hard—I'm just; and so is father. You couldn't be generous without it; and it will be generous of the governor if he lets Merle finish his course at Oxford, and helps him a bit to pay off his debts out of his allowance. I will use any influence I have to get him to do that—and I shall be very glad if he forgives the beggar, who does seem miserable enough—if you like."

"Thank you, Jack," said Enid, meekly.

"Oh, you needn't thank *me*," said Jack. "I don't want him forgiven for his own sake half as much as because I hate gloom and rows when one wants to be quiet and jolly. Merle deserves a deuce of a tanning, and I hope he'll get it; for then it will be over all the sooner, and—hallo, there's the dad!"

And bounding on to his feet at the sound of Mr. Leyburn's voice below, Jack was out of the room and shaking hands with his father before another minute had elapsed.

Enid went down to dinner feeling slightly comforted. Jack was not wont to perform less than he had promised.

To her great joy, the evening passed without any mention of disagreeables. Mr. Leyburn was always happy at having his son with him, and Miss Leyburn's mind was pleasantly occupied with her mosaic brooch, which recalled memories of sundry other brooches, mosaic and otherwise, which had been given to her at various periods, with the givers' pedigrees, and various other particulars, all poured into Enid's ears as she sat listening pleasantly, while thinking half wonderingly to herself that Jack looked positively handsome, he seemed in such jovial spirits, and his eyes shone so brightly and animatedly out of his square, good-humoured face.

She little knew what it was which had softened the expression of young Leyburn's features; nor how hard he found it at having to keep the history of his love to himself

till the settling of Merle's difficulties had left the sky clear for pleasanter matters.

Enid fell asleep that night praying that the storm might blow over quickly—praying still more fervently that her cousin might be aided and strengthened to begin a new life of honesty and self-denial. I think force of habit made her try to palliate his offences, even with her Maker; but assuredly she did not count them as slight to her own heart, or she had never prayed so earnestly for their pardon.

The following morning brought another letter from Mr. Abrahams, in answer to the one Mr. Leyburn had written him.

"Oh," said the latter gentleman, glancing from it to Jack, who was eating his breakfast very heartily, "this reminds me that I have something important to talk to you about on the way to the bank."

Jack nodded, and Enid looked up with quick appealing eyes; but her father's face wore its sternest expression. He never looked at her.

At the hall door, however, as she lingered to see them off, Mr. Leyburn turned round and addressed her.

"If that young scamp arrives before I do, tell him from me that he had better go to my study, and prepare a summary of his accounts for inspection on my return. And mind, Enid," in a harsher tone, "I desire that you will not go pitying him and making little of his duplicity and extravagance. Do you hear?"

"Yes, father."

"Well, I'm glad I'm not the scamp," said Jack, taking up the cudgels quite unexpectedly. "Why, father, Enid is the recognized good spirit of any of us who get into scrapes. She couldn't do the righteously rigid female if she tried, silly little pussy cat!"

And with a nod of encouragement to his grateful sister, Jack put his arm through Mr. Leyburn's, and walked him off quite cheerfully.

"I think it is a beautiful thing to have a brother all of one's own," said Enid to herself, in happy soliloquy.

She little knew how much more tender to the sex Jack had grown since he had opened his heart to Baby Delamayne's rose-white image.

Merle did not arrive till within an hour of the bank closing; and Enid, who had

been watching surreptitiously for him ever since breakfast, now dutifully refrained from running out to meet him as her heart prompted, and, in obedience to her father's wishes, waited in the dining-room, pretending that she did not hear the familiar voice in the hall asking whether the family were out, and Jane's answer—

"Yes, sir—all but Miss Enid. She's in, and your room's ready."

Her face was crimson as a rose, in painful protest against this prohibition from tenderness, as Merle opened the door; and he saw it, and interpreted it after the manner of men—*i.e.*, he thought that, knowing all, she was disgusted with him, and wished to make early proof of the same. There was little affection in the cold, hurt tone of his voice, as he said, not offering to kiss her as usual—

"How do you do, Enid? I hope I don't disturb you. You expected me to-day, I suppose?"

"Oh, yes—papa told me; and your room is quite ready."

His manner made her more constrained than ever; and even her hand was extended less eagerly for the fact that both of his were full. But, oh, the yearning sweetness in those large, grey eyes!

"Thank you. I will go to it. I can quite understand your impatience to get rid of me, Enid. Indeed, I hardly expected a kinder welcome, since I gathered from my uncle's letter that you had at once informed him of the contents of mine to you. You did, did you not?"

"Yes, Merle, I—"

"Probably your aunt and brother too? As I put private on it, you, of course, made it public property as quickly as possible. Thanks," as he read a penitent assent in her fair, grave face. "It doesn't matter. I might have expected it."

Enid felt a little angry. After all her sorrow and intercession, to be thus met by their object—and out of sheer, wilful ill-temper, too! It was too bad; and the young lady resented it.

"I do not know what you expected, Merle," she answered, with quiet dignity. "Hardly a kind welcome, if you cannot give a courteous greeting."

He turned round, not replying; and her conscience smote her as the light fell on his pale, worn face. How terribly ill and haggard he looked! With a little cry of pity

and sorrow, she stretched out both hands to him.

"Oh, Merle, I am sorry! Forget it. Indeed, I did not mean to be unkind. How could you think so, dear?"

"I never thought *you* would turn against me, even if I deserved it," he answered, dropping wearily into a chair; "and I suppose I do. I'm a nice credit to you, Enid, am I not? How you must have been condemning me!"

"Indeed I have not," she said, earnestly. "How do I know your temptations?"

"How indeed! And yet that would be no excuse with the generality of women. God knows this has almost driven me mad."

She made no immediate reply, only stood over him, as he sat with head bowed upon his folded arms, stroking his shoulder softly, and murmuring—"Poor boy! poor boy!" until a sudden thought made her go to the sideboard, and bring him a glass of wine.

Merle drank it, almost eagerly, and thanked her, adding—

"It is the first thing I've taken to-day."

"Dear Merle! and with that long journey! It was wrong."

"Or it wouldn't be me."

"Don't say that," she pleaded; "because a man falls once, that is no reason he should not rise again, even higher than before."

"Once, child! do you think these accursed debts are a thing of to-day? Why, they have been growing and growing and hanging round my neck for the last year and a half, till I was nearly crazy with thinking how to get clear of them."

"Merle, if you had only told us!"

"Where would have been the good?"

"There is always good in doing right. Getting into debt was wrong enough, but concealment made it much worse."

The words sounded cold, but he did not feel them so. The kind fingers still pressing on his shoulder took away all the sting, and he only answered, gloomily—

"Ah, it is easy to talk; but if you only knew the way a man is dragged on in that confounded place—"

"Merle, don't. I can guess something of it, or I should not pity you as I do for not having sufficient strength to resist temptation."

"What a weak fool you must think me!"

She was silent.

"Ah! I see you do," he repeated, flushing hotly. "You may as well own it."

"I do think you weak, Merle," she answered, gently but candidly; "but no fool, certainly."

"And so only the more to blame."

"What do you think, Merle? You ought to know best."

He only laid his head on his arms again, and groaned.

On that she began to pity him woefully, and patted his head as if he were a grieving child.

"Come, Merle, all is not lost yet. You have done wrong, and have been forestalled in owning it. Don't sit down and despair, as if the game were played out."

"What is there left—now?"

"To make amends. Tell my father the whole story, how it has happened, and all about it; and make up your mind to retrench from to-day. God will help you, Merle, if you ask him."

These last words in the softest of whispers, more as if in comforting reminder to her own spirit than preaching to his. He did not resent it. Whatever errors Merle Kinnardson might fall into, or however little he might practise religion in his own life, he always revered it, both in itself and as expressed in the words and actions of those who truly lived up to its principles. Now he held his peace a moment, pressing the kind hand in answer, and inquired, somewhat anxiously—

"Was my uncle in an awful rage? Yes, I see he was, by your face. That beast Abrahams—"

"It was not the debt so much," she interrupted, colouring all over, "but the deception. Merle, did you really make yourself out to be a wealthy ward of my father's, and—"

"Of course not. Are you going to make me answerable for all the rubbish people take into their heads?"

"I am so glad."

"But I won't say I went about denying it. If people choose to be fools—*que veux tu?*"

Her eyes met his so gravely, the question needed no answer.

"Enid!" he said, appealingly.

"Oh! Merle, I can't bear it. I thought you so true, so noble—a man like my father. Think how upright he is, and how he trusts to the honour of all belonging to him."

Think what it would be to you in his place, to have one of his own family—one of us three—so deceive him."

And quite unwillingly and unconsciously, a large, round tear rolled quietly down her cheek, and lay, a liquid, eloquent diamond, upon the sleeve of her cousin's coat. There are sermons in stones: likewise lessons in a single drop of salt water. Merle's resentful spirit gave way at once.

"Let me tell *you* about it first," he said eagerly. "I can't bear to lose your good opinion so completely. Enid, dear, don't! To think that a fellow like me should have made you cry."

And out came the whole history of his debts, or rather of such of them as would bear repetition in such pure confessional; for there were things—especially of late, and while chafing under the recollection of that girl's grave in the river, that closed shop in the little back street—in which Merle had sought a mad refuge from the monotony of study and pleasure, and which he would fain have buried in oblivion even from himself. Still, it was a comfort to make a clean breast of his other follies and extravagances, to break down his habitual reserve at the expense of his own self-respect and that of his cousin; and the result was beneficial, for when Mr. Leyburn came home he found his nephew awaiting him in a frankly contrite spirit, very different from the half fierce, half despairing mood in which he had arrived at Marshton Fallows rather more than an hour before. Jack was right. It was worse than useless for Enid to attempt what he called the righteously rigid character, but perhaps her gentleness worked as well or better; for even Merle, while softened and melted by the quick understanding and perfect sympathy which met his confession, never felt for one moment that Enid was making light of his offence; on the contrary, it became blacker in his own eyes from the intense pain it seemed to give her.

How the after-interview between uncle and nephew went off she never heard.

Merle did not appear at dinner, which was late in consequence of the length of the séance; but Jack, to whom his sister whispered her anxiety, only laughed.

"Oh, poor little devil! You couldn't expect him to show among all you women after my father's jobation, could you? He told me to make his apologies—headache

or something. Upon my soul, though, he did look as if his head were no end bad."

"Poor fellow!" said Enid, pitifully.

"Oh, it's all very well to say 'poor fellow,'" grumbled her brother; "but your poor fellows always get off easier than others. You can't go on thrashing a chap who's floored at the first fencer; and I say, Enid, this is a bad job—nearer four than three hundred. The governor seems doubtful about letting him finish at Oxford."

"Oh, Jack!"

"Well, you wait and see."

And she did wait; but it was nearly a week before the question was decided.

LANCON.

LANCON is the Jersey name for sand-eels—half serpent, half fish—which are caught round its coasts, and with which its market is very fairly supplied. "Lançonning" is part of the Jersey fisherman's employment, in company with shrimping, crabbing, lobstering, and deep water fishing; but it also gives occasion for a good many of the pleasant parties arranged in the summer, when the sea is not too cold for tender feet, and no consequent bad results are to be dreaded for the younger and weaker portion of the family. When the spring tide, or grande marée, is at its full, a large field of rocks is uncovered at low water, and in the gravel amongst these the lançon are to be found. In summer the search for them is carried on by night, and in the colder weather by day; not that it is ever particularly cold in Jersey, at least, for any length of time, but still it requires tolerably warm weather for the lançon to be got at in the night. They lie underneath the sandy gravel, at no very great depth, and are uncovered by means of a hoe, or an instrument in shape like a sickle, but very blunt, so as not to cut the fish; and when they are on the surface they must be seized pretty sharply, and with a certain amount of dexterity, for, as their name shows us, they are very slippery, and if they once get away they imbed themselves again in the gravel with surprising rapidity, or escape to any pool close at hand, and once there they are not to be caught.

I was staying in Jersey a summer or two ago, when the idea of a sand-eeling party was started. I think it was one of the juniors who suggested it; but, at any rate, it was immediately taken up, and the autho-

rities were begged to allow a lançoning expedition to be made up. As a matter of course, objections were also started; but with the assistance of Uncle Ned, who was staying with us, these were also got over, and the matter was put into shape, and duly organized for the following Monday evening. This was Saturday, and naturally preparations were begun at once—that is to say, everybody provided himself or herself, as the case might be, with lançon hooks, hoes, baskets, or at the least, bags—the two former intended to obtain, the two latter to carry home, the spoil. We likewise obtained the services of Mr. Philippe M——, a friend of ours, who combined the utile dulci by going down *à bas eau* for whatsoever fish he might obtain, doubtless with pleasure to himself and profit to his family. He was, and is now, I believe, parish clerk; and I well remember the harmonious but withal dignified manner in which he used to repeat the responses in church, and the nervous way in which, at French morning service, he would give out the psalms to be sung. A thoroughly good-natured man he was with us all, and, as he knew every rock about the coast, we were glad to ask him to go down with us—a necessary precaution in a place where the tide runs so strongly as it does, and where, by the meeting of two channels, you can be surrounded almost before you know where you are, when once the tide has turned.

Monday morning—the much expected day—arrived, and of course the young ones had nothing else to talk of but our coming nocturnal expedition. With them the hours must have passed very slowly, but the appointed time approached at last, and after tea they all departed to array themselves in becoming apparel. Philippe came to us about nine o'clock, and soon we started—the party being put by the authorities under the charge of Uncle Ned and myself, I being of the mature age of twenty-four.

There was Aunt Ellen, clad in garments which must have belonged to her ancestresses; Uncle Ned, in an old shooting jacket, a pair of small clothes green with age, which he was wont to call his “fishing togs,” and a pair of rough boots, the whole surmounted by a broad Panama hat. I have him even now in my mind's eye, as he stood surveying with a benign smile the assembled party, who had greeted his appearance with much shouting and laughter. The other ladies

consisted of my young sisters, Amy and Fanny, and our cousins, Blanche and Lucy, young ladies somewhere at the end of their teens, who presented themselves in what they called fashionable fishing costumes—to wit, short blue serge skirts, jackets of any style or colour that came to hand first, and as for hats, the less said about them the better. Two young brothers of theirs, Frank and Jack, completed our party.

We set out, as I have said, about nine o'clock, and having made our way to a village by the shore, called Le Hocq, we proceeded to the commencement of our business—the said commencement consisting in getting to Le Moulinée, our destination.

We had to walk, or rather stumble, over a rough, rocky road, intended for the seaweed carts. It was a fine night in July, and the moon was up, so we did not take with us the lanterns which are employed on dark nights. A great game, too, that scramble was. Now and then we heard such a little shriek, as ladies are wont to give, when one of them trod in a pool; and then again, one of the party would come to grief over some stone on which he tripped, whereupon all the rest would laugh at him, and he would retaliate by splashing them in the next pool; or one would slip on the seaweed, and want to be pulled up again. I think our friend Philippe can never have had such a noisy party with him before; but the fun rose to its height when Uncle Ned, in wading through a pool, got right into a hole, and stood up to his waist in water.

At last, however, we reached Le Moulinée, and everybody went to work scraping and hunting after the lançon. Cries of “Here's one!” “Have you got him?” “Which way did that one go?” “Is he in the water?” “No; I have him here,” “Where's Uncle Ned?” “Oh, there he is—has he found many?” “Ask Aunt Ellen how many she's got,” and so on, must have curiously struck the ear of any casual fisherman who might have been in a neighbouring locality. But it was great fun.

Of course, noisy parties like ours had no chance of catching lançon in any quantity. That is left for the dexterous and experienced hand; and when such a one is lançoning, I know of no casualty more annoying that can befall him than to have his work disturbed by a noisy company of pleasure-seekers. It may seem a selfish

sentiment, but it is not really so. The fisherman has to earn his bread as much as anybody else; and when he has found a good spot, it is very hard for his spoil to be taken away—or rather, allowed altogether to escape—by the interruption of those who care little about the sand-eels, but come for the fun of the thing.

We had caught a few, and missed many more, when our friendly guide told us that it was time to commence the march home, as the tide was coming up. So we started, and, after a like scramble to the first, reached our dwelling-place not very far from one a.m., Uncle Ned's last remark being to the effect that "he didn't think we should be down too early the next day," and Aunt Ellen's that "she was dead tired;" whilst the younger ladies did not say much, but failed to appear till the morning had been very well aired indeed.

ONLY A YEAR.

CHAPTER IV.

"I THINK YOU ARE A PERFECT GENTLEMAN."

MISS KYRIEL, with her long pedigree, and her intense pride in her blue blood, listened to this labourer's son in amazement. He announced his descent in a tone as haughty as she herself could have assumed; yet she could discern that the last sentence was, as it were, wrung out of himself.

By what? Was it by a sense of honour, by which he felt bound to place himself on his proper level?

She spoke suddenly—involuntarily:

"I think you are a perfect gentleman."

"I think," he replied, with a tincture of amusement in his tone, "that is almost too high praise for any man."

As he spoke, they emerged from the narrow, sheltered lane they had been in, on to a wide, bleak expanse of moor. A piercing north wind drove the snow in their faces, and there was not a sign of house or shelter of any description.

Phillis was no coward or nervous fine lady, but she did shudder at the prospect of crossing the moor in such a furious storm, and amidst such terrible darkness.

"I know where we are now," she said. "This is the Refton Common. The lane we have been in is called Long-lane, and leads between High and Low Refton."

"And in which direction is High Refton, and how far off?" asked Thyrlé.

"About two or three miles straight across the Common."

"Do you think we had better try to reach High Refton, or go back by the lane to Low Refton?" he again inquired.

"There are so many cross-roads and by-lanes between this and Low Refton, that I fear we should miss the way, now it is so dark," she answered. "I know High Refton lies in a straight line from here—we can easily see it in daylight from where we stand. I think you will find a roadway a little to the right."

After some close search, Thyrlé notified that he had found a track, into which they struck across the Common. It was very high land, and Phillis—wet through, and obliged to sit still and go slowly, while the keen, snow-laden wind seemed to cut her at every blast—shivered and cowered down with a feeling more akin to fear than she often experienced.

"You are leading the horse, are you not, Mr. Thyrlé?" she asked, presently. "If you are, I need not hold the reins. My hands are quite numbed with the cold."

"You must indeed be cold," he said, stopping the horse. "It was stupid in me, but I forgot you were taking no exercise. Just stoop a little this way, please."

It was so dark now, that, though he was close by her, she did not observe, by the difference of colour between his red hunting coat and his waistcoat, that he had taken off the former.

Stooping a little as he bade her, wondering what he could want, she was taken by surprise to find herself suddenly enveloped in his warm, thick coat, which, in spite of all her opposition and entreaties, he buttoned her up in when she had put her arms down the sleeves: these, being a good deal too long for her, made a nice muff; and, sorry as she was to deprive Mr. Thyrlé of his garment, yet she was quite willing to acknowledge the comfort of it.

"I am walking fast, you know, and don't feel the cold," was his reply to all her remonstrances.

They utterly missed the way to Refton; and, after a long hour's wandering on the cold, bleak moor, they were glad to find a road rather more sheltered, and which they hoped might lead them to some habitation. The worst of it was that the snow and the

darkness were so thick that it would have been almost impossible to see a house, even if it stood by the roadside.

Thyrle talked as cheerily as he could, telling her a few apropos stories of adventures he had had in snow in Canada and storm in Australia, all of which terminated happily, some even absurdly.

She felt his kindness, and did her best to keep up her courage and endurance; but when one hour and then another went by, and they were still blindly and almost hopelessly fighting on against the storm along that interminable road, she was so hungry, cold, and tired, she could have cried like a child.

"What time do you think it is now, Mr. Thyrle?" she asked, after a long silence.

"Not very late yet," he answered. "I should think it is three or four hours since I met you, and it was then about five. It is now eight or nine o'clock, I should say. Are you very cold?"

"Very," she replied, struggling to keep down sobs of weariness; "and I am so dreadfully stiff and numb."

"Have you had anything to eat since breakfast?"

"No. We generally bring two or three biscuits in our pockets; but we were in rather a hurry this morning, so forgot them. I had that bit of bread, you know, at the farmhouse—and the gin."

He laughed, and very pleasant it sounded on the wild night.

"I didn't forget my brandy flask," he said; "but I left it behind for the benefit of a fellow who had rather an awkward spill, and had fainted. It was near a place called Consall, and long before I met you. No, I did not know the man."

"I am afraid you must be far colder than I am. I don't like to think of it," she said—"I feel so selfish. And I think this poor horse is tired, too."

"Not the least. He gets so balled with this confounded snow—that is what makes him go uncomfortably. You are no weight for him."

Again there was a long tramp in silence, broken only when Thyrle stopped to knock the snow from the horse's shoes.

The snow fell faster than ever, and the darkness was intense.

"Mr. Thyrle," at length said Phillis, "you are there? I can't see or hear you."

"Oh, yes, I am here," he responded.

"But I'm not much good to you, I'm afraid. You see, I know nothing of this county. This is the first time I have been out with the hounds since I came."

"I began to think you had vanished. I could not see you," she said. "Do you know my brother?" for she remembered, with a thrill of fear, the man who had been thrown, and that Thyrle would probably not have known him, or inquired his name.

"I knew no one but Mr. Brooke on the field; but I presume your brother was the other gentleman with you. He has a thick, fair moustache, and brown eyes."

"Yes," she answered, almost with a laugh, as she felt a quick relief. "I never thought gentlemen noticed the colour of each other's eyes."

"I do, you see."

"Don't you smoke, Mr. Thyrle?"

"Yes," he replied.

"Then why don't you? Oh, I wish you would!"

"Are you sure you don't mind it?"

"Quite sure; and it will be a slight consolation to me for having robbed you of your coat."

"Then if you will be kind enough to give me my cigar case from your right-hand pocket," he said—"a little fusee case you will find, I think, on this side. Thank you very much," as she laughingly produced his property; and in a few minutes a bright little red spark, and the pleasant fragrance of the smoke, made her—not to mention him—feel comparatively cheerful.

Before the cigar was quite smoked away, Thyrle took a very minute inspection of a beautiful thick holly hedge beside which they happened to be passing very close.

"I have found out where we are at last," he exclaimed. "John Peel and I jumped this very fence this morning, on our way to the meet—it is the last on my ground; so, if we take the first turn to the left, in half an hour or so we shall be at Merresford."

Now this was a termination to her adventure which was not at all looked for by Phillis. She knew not but that this man's mother and brothers and sisters might not be all at Merresford; and although her native honesty spoke up for him, she rather recoiled from the idea of the rest of the iron-mining papa's progeny. Or, for all she knew to the contrary, Mr. Thyrle might have no relations with him, and might keep a bachelor establishment.

Yet what could she say? It would be absurd prudery to speak of staying out in the cold, and yet it would be impossible that she could go to his house under such circumstances.

With extreme embarrassment she began—

"I—Mr. Thyrlé—don't think me foolish—but if you will allow a servant to go with me, I would rather—I— Had I not better go on to Hallingford?"

He threw away the end of his cigar, and laughed.

"You have acquired a taste for travelling in a snow-storm, I suppose, Miss Kyriel!" But she at once knew that he comprehended her meaning. "I can't say I have; and I think fire and food will be very jolly, and extremely beneficial to you; only I hope you won't take fright and run away when you see my old aunt."

"Aunt!" repeated Phillis, in a tone of much relief. "She keeps your house, I suppose?"

"I believe she does"—adding, with a rather sly emphasis in his tone, "but she is a dreadfully low person—vulgar and uneducated."

"Oh! Mr. Thyrlé," exclaimed Phillis, colouring scarlet in the darkness, "if you knew how I regret those words, you would not repeat them."

"They are so absurdly apropos—you will say so yourself when you see her. She is a most undesirable relative—neither agreeable, handsome, nor rich; yet she is the only one I have, and she expressed a wish to come to me."

"I am sure," thought Phillis, "I wonder you keep her with you if you don't like her."

But she made no remark further than to ask if he was quite sure of the way now.

"I dare say you know it better than I do," was the reply. "We are going up a walk by a beech wood. The park paling is on the right hand."

Less than half an hour brought them to the hall door at Merresford. In a minute more Thyrlé had lifted her from the horse, and had supported her through the well-lighted hall into a snug room with a blazing fire, and a table spread in anticipation of at least one hungry hunter.

"Where is Miss Mason, John?" demanded Thyrlé, as he unfastened the buttons of his hunting coat, from which Miss Kyriel was endeavouring to free herself, her

own fingers being too cold to accomplish the task.

"She went to bed an hour ago, sir," replied the servant, looking at Miss Kyriel and his master with undisguised astonishment. And certainly Mr. Thyrlé's airy attire, on "sec a night in winter, might weel make him stare."

Thyrlé threw aside the coat, stilling a hasty imprecation on the lady in question between his teeth.

"Send Mrs. Holderton here at once. I am so sorry, Miss Kyriel," he said, turning to her, "but it seems that my aunt, on the only occasion I ever particularly wanted her, has gone to her room. The house-keeper is a very good old lady; and if you will get your wet things off, and come down, and have something to eat, I will have the brougham ready for you to go home in. Now, you will take this, please, before you stir."

He had been preparing her a glass of hot brandy and water, which she drank without any hesitation, and was all the better for it.

It is possible that Miss Kyriel took some pains with her toilette that evening, although it was rapid and simple enough.

When she rejoined Mr. Thyrlé, her rich dark hair was skilfully coiled round her head, and her habit was exchanged for Mrs. Holderton's best black silk gown, and a soft Scotch shawl of grey Shetland wool, belonging to Miss Mason. A little knot of scarlet ribbon, which she had worn all day, was at her throat, and was just enough to relieve the sombreness of her costume.

Mr. Thyrlé—with a coat on now—began at once to express his regret at the impossibility of her returning home that evening, as she had desired. The road to Hallingford was blocked up with a drift several feet deep already, and, in the present darkness, it would be useless to attempt to cut a way through. The storm seemed to be increasing, and there was no chance of going anywhere until daylight.

Miss Kyriel was certainly not sorry to hear this. A drive of ten miles appeared very unattractive to her; and was not that tête-à-tête little supper, in that warm, bright little room, after the cold and wretchedness of her long ride, luxurious and pleasant?

And this labourer's son—what was there about him that made her think it worth while to be fascinating? She could see him clearly now, and with some curiosity she

studied his face. His figure, she had before satisfied herself, was one of perfect symmetry, denoting uncommon strength and agility.

Not a handsome face—not a good-tempered face, she decided; but, nevertheless, one which attracted Miss Kyriel's eyes that evening, and her thoughts long afterwards. Dark, short hair, with neither wave nor curl in it, was brushed off a broad but slightly low forehead; deep-set grey eyes; a tolerable nose, of no particular denomination; a hard mouth, with thin lips, not altogether hidden by the droop of a thick, dark moustache; no whiskers, and a rather square and determined chin and jaw; a very brown face, with a somewhat stern expression when in repose.

"You have travelled a great deal, I suppose?" said Miss Kyriel, judging from appearances.

She had made her survey by stealthy glances, not altogether unobserved.

"Yes, I am very fond of travelling. I have had no home, you see; and knocking about the world is less lonely work than living in a great dull place like this all alone."

"I thought you had your aunt with you."

"Of course; but I don't consider her much in the light of a companion—nor would you, Miss Kyriel, had you seen her. I hardly know what induced me to try this place—I am tired of it already. But it does not much matter: I am going to Russia when the hunting is over."

"Are you?" thought Phillis. "I should like you to stay."

It was nearly twelve o'clock when a maid announced that a room was ready for the young lady, and Miss Kyriel retired. She had not been wasting her time that evening. She was not going to lose her heart—not likely. As a girl of seventeen, she had done such a foolish thing; but she was older and wiser now. Yet, thinking this, did she not do her very best to stir the nature of the miner's son as she fancied it had never been stirred before?

Phillis! Phillis! strong men are dangerous toys to play with!

There is a certain savage weapon which, when thrown to a distance, rebounds with ten times the violence with which it was cast, gathering strength as it flies back. Surely nobody before has been so impolite

as to liken a lovely woman's powers of fascination to a boomerang!

Phillis began that night to throw her weapon, feeling herself on very safe ground. She had been bright, amusing, winning, as she well could be when she chose; and long after she had gone, Archer Thyrle sat soberly smoking and thinking—as he thought many and many a night afterwards—that it was perhaps possible that the life to which he had resigned himself might brighten. She had struck some long silent note within him which vibrated almost as she intended it should; for he went on to think that to have this girl, haughty and indifferent though she might be to others—to have her by his fireside as she had sat to-night, knowing that she belonged to him and loved him, would be something more like happiness than anything he was likely to come across in his life.

But he did not know then how many men had thought the same thing. He pictured to himself the small patrician head, the chiselled features, the cream white skin, and the changeful expressions, as he had seen them in the firelight, backed by the dark velvet of her chair.

Then he rose, and, folding his arms on the chimneypiece, took a look at himself in the mirror above it.

"You born fool!" was his commentary. "Do you suppose such a girl as she is would care to think twice about an ugly face like yours? 'Tis not often I look at you, Heaven knows; for, to say the truth, the less I see of you the better I like you."

He turned round, and, leaning back against the grey marble, contemplated his legs.

"Good enough," was his verdict. "Nobody ever said you were not well made; but not one woman in fifty knows if a man's legs are straight, knock-kneed, or bandy. Could I get her to marry me for my money? Quite possible. And I would rather leave it alone altogether. I can't tell yet if she is a good sort or not. It is a terrible risk, this getting married; and I think I had much better keep out of it. I am very well as I am."

He opened a locket which hung at his watch chain, and looked for a few minutes on the pictured face it contained.

"Different, indeed!" he said, shutting it. "Not clear, true eyes, like yours, Eley. I am best as I am."

Yet Miss Kyriel's boomerang had been marvellously well aimed, and had come very near its mark.

Would it rebound? And, if so, how or where?

THE CASUAL OBSERVER.

BIRD-CATCHERS' MARKET.

SEEING the discussion now going on in the papers about the capture of small birds, and also that men have been summoned and fined for bird-catching, fancy suggested that a little casual observation of the matter would not be out of place; so, wending—as Harrison Ainsworth or G. P. R. James would have said—our steps in the right direction, our ears were soon greeted by a call—"Pink—pink—pink!" "Pink—pink—pink!" on all sides: that sweet, familiar old bird-call that one has heard hundreds of times beside some budding wood in spring-time; and then the little, cheery, jerking song of the chaffinch, as it challenges and answers cock-bird after cock-bird, throwing down its gage, and summoning, with flourish of trumpet, some rival to the fray.

But there is no pleasant sunny woodland, with tender green leafage, here; and for awhile, though the challenge and song are incessant, no birds are visible; for this is Club-row on a Sunday morning, and we have come down Sclater-street, looking up at great dingy casements where Spitalfields weavers have plied the silk loom any time these hundred years. There are shops, too, here and shops there, but whence comes the bird-call?

It is a puzzle for a few moments, till "Pink—pink—pink!" there it is again, and undoubtedly out of that square, handkerchief-covered bundle that dirty youth has under his arm. In fact, this is a small cage, tied closely up in a handkerchief that once possessed a colour—now has none.

One's eyes open wider, too, and one sees that in these tolerably crowded thoroughfares, certainly two out of every six men and lads carry each a cage, tied up in a handkerchief, and in this cage is what is here termed a "pegging finch," so named from its being secured by a string to a peg, the said peg being driven into a tree, countryward, and other pegs, anointed with bird-lime, being disposed above and below.

The lively little bird soon utters its spring challenge, and rivals come around to the

attack, but only to get their plumage sullied and fastened with the filthy gluten, when they become the prey of the bird-fancier, or the gentle youth of Spitalfields, Shoreditch, and Bethnal-green, who make matches with them—bird to sing against bird—the greatest number of strains in so many minutes.

There is a strange, dreamy, shuffling, slouching aspect amongst the people here. Very little talking, but a general carrying about of birds in handkerchiefs. Boys, too, are in the crowd: one has a mangey-looking cock, in a state of perennial moult; another a half-blind puppy, who seems to have had a glimpse of the world, and to like it so little that he shut his eyes again. There is a goat here, and its kid; and, close behind, a lad with a whitey-brown hen with a sardonic cast of countenance, as if she rejoiced in being bought by people to lay eggs, and had never laid any for the last eight or ten years. She evidently knows, too, that she is quite safe, for it would be labour in vain to kill her, unless she could be converted into fiddle-strings. It may have been fancy, but certainly that hen seemed to divine one's errand, and wink and wink, as much as to say, like Mr. Lionel Brough, "Vat a larks!"

There is quite a promenade here, of a very slouchy character though, and the promenaders are wholly of the masculine gender—people who stop to gaze in the windows of the places of business, which are all open as far as shutters are concerned. This, about the cleanest of all, bears the announcement, "Purveyor of Pigeons to H.R.H. the Prince of Wales;" and here are specimens in the window of the soft, iridescent-necked, dove-eyed birds which fall to the aristocratic guns at Hurlingham and Wormwood Scrubs.

"Pigins, sir," says a man in shirt sleeves—shirt sleeves is full morning costume here—"Pigins, sir, just now's dear; we couldn't let you have pigins for less nor eightin shillins a dozen."

"And sparrows?"

"Sparrows, sir? Two shillings a dozen."

An enlightenment this, for who would have thought a pert, sooty, perky sparrow to be worth twopence, current coin of the realm?

In this window, where there is a crowd of boys making "putty noses" against the dirty glass, are nests after nests of young birds—larks, blackbirds, yellow-beaked and callow, gaping as if they took every flattened nose for an adhesive snail; starlings crying

so sadly for the parent birds that never respond with slug, grub, or wireworm to their call. Here, too, in the next shop window, are cages of fowls, each cage a veritable "Little Ease" to the unfortunate prisoner, who gives a doleful peck every now and then at nothing, as if nature prompted it to the effort to sheer off paralysis of the spine. Heap upon heap here, like green cheese-plates, are clover sods, fresh cut somewhere in the country, for the prisoned larks, bare of breast, that beat against their wires, stare up at the solitary patch of blue, and flapping idle wings, trill out their matin lay far sweeter than the hoarse voices of a well-meaning party of black-clothed young men and maidens, who parade the street singing a hymn, whose burden is "I love Jesus."

Shop after shop, with heavy, coarse-featured men gazing on imprisoned pigeons—runts, dragons, tumblers, jacobins, bald-heads, and blue rocks—with their stolid gaze. This window is quite a centre of attraction, for it contains a philosophic-looking hedgehog, making the best of things in his spiny armour; and on the opposite side of the way is a round, dirty, feathery ball, which performs two hops to and fro, and looks uncommonly lively, but it requires no slight stretch of the imagination to believe that it is a jay. Sickly cocks, dilapidated hens in cages, mice in wired boxes, greenfinches, yellowhammers, and "nightingales in full song," but that song is not heard.

There is trade done here, too, in refreshments, the most popular being brandy-snaps—a kind of sugary glue—and periwinkles, which youths, who have a pint in a dirty cap, wriggle out with pins, and devour in the presence of hungry birds, who make a pardonable mistake in supposing them to be grubs. There is a man, too, here with a gaudily-painted van, having taps and glasses at the back, and inscriptions respecting the cures performed by sarsaparilla and valerian. He sells rapidly tumblers full of a beery-looking compound, which is drunk with great gusto at a penny per glass, and froths liberally as it is drawn. There is not much sociability, but a general conspirator-like aspect of the men and lads bearing the wrapped-up "pegging finches"—a look as if they had bombshells which they feared would go off; but above all, loud and clear, comes the tuneful, sharp "pink, pink," resounding down Club-row and its adjacent birdy streets.

ANGUISH IN PRINT.

IN THE STRICTEST CONFIDENCE.

TEAR THE THIRD.

IN A STATE OF IGNORANCE.

ANY one with a heart beating beneath her own can fancy our feelings. Of course I am aware that some unfeeling, ribald men—I do not include thee, oh, Achille!—would have turned the wretch's blunder into a subject for jest; but thanks to the goddess of Bonheur, there was none of the race present, and Mrs. Fortesquieu de Blount came mincing forward, smiling most benignly in her pet turban.

A dreadful old creature—I shall never forget her! Always dressed in black satin, a skin parting front, false teeth, and a thick gold chain hung over her shoulders; while the shocking old thing always thrust everything artificial that she wore right under your eyes, so that you could not fail to see how deceptive she was. She was soon deep in conversation with mamma; while I looked wearily round the room, which was full to overflowing with all sorts of fancy work, so that you could not stir an inch without being hooked, or caught, or upsetting something. There were antimacassars, sofa cushions, fire screens, bead mats, wool mats, crochet mats, coverings for the sofa, piano, and chimneypiece, candle screens, curtains, ottomans, penwipers—things enough, in short, to have set up a famous fancy fair. And, of course, I knew well enough what they all meant—presents from pupils who had been foolish enough to spend their money in buying the materials, and then working them up to ornament the old tabby's drawing-room.

Well, there, then, I don't care. It's the truth; she was a horrible old tabby, with nothing genuine or true about her, or I would not speak so disrespectfully. She did not care a bit for her pupils, more than to value them according to how much they brought her in per annum, so that the drawing-room boarders—there were no parlour boarders there, nothing so common—stood first in her estimation. I felt so vexed that first day, sitting in the drawing-room, I could have pulled off the old thing's turban; and I'm sure that if I had the false front would have come with it. There she was, pointing out the different crayon drawings upon the wall; and mamma, who cannot tell a decent sketch from a bad

one, lifting up her hands and pretending to be in ecstasies. And do you mean to tell me that they did not both know how they were deceiving one another? Stuff! Of course they did, and they both liked it. Mamma praised Mrs. Blount, and Mrs. Blount praised mamma and her "sweet child;" and I declare it was just like what the dreadful American man said in his horrid, low, clever book—that was so funny, and yet one felt ashamed at having laughed—where he writes to the newspaper editor to puff his show, and promises to return the favour by having all his printing done at his office; and papa read it so funnily, and called it "reciprocity of allaying the irritation of the dorsal region," which we said was much more refined than Mr. Artemus Ward's way of putting it.

I was quite ashamed of mamma, that I was, for it did seem so little; and, oh! how out of patience I was! But there, that part of the interview came to an end, and a good thing too; for I knew well enough a great deal of it was to show off before me, for of course Mrs. Blount had shown mamma the drawings and things before. So then we were taken over the place, and introduced to the teachers and the pupils who had returned, and there really did seem to be some nice girls; but as for the teachers—of all the old, yellow, spectacled things I ever did see, they were the worst; while as for the German Fraulein, I don't know what to say bad enough to describe her, for I never before did see any one so hook-nosed and parrot.

Then we went upstairs to see the dormitories—there were no bed-rooms—and afterwards returned to the drawing-room, when the lady principal kissed me on both cheeks and said I was most welcome to her establishment, and I declare I thought she meant to bite me, for her dreadful teeth went snap, though perhaps, like mamma's, they were not well under control.

Then mamma had some sherry, and declared that she was more enchanted with the place than she had been at her last visit; and she hoped I should be very happy and very good, and make great progress in my studies, when Mrs. Blount said she was quite certain that I should gratify my parents' wishes in every respect, and be a great credit to the establishment; and I knew she was wondering all the time how many silk dresses and how many bonnets I had brought, for everything about the place was show, show always, and I soon found out how the plainly

dressed girls were snubbed and kept in the background; while as for Miss Grace Murray, the half teacher, half pupil, who had her education for the assistance she gave with the younger girls, I'm sure it was shameful—such a sweet, gentle, loveable girl as she was—shameful that she should have been so ill-treated, and I'm sure I speak without prejudice, for she never was any friend of mine, but always distrusted me, and more than once reported what I suppose she was right in calling flippant behaviour; but I could not help it, and I was dreadfully wicked while at the Cedars.

At last the fly bore mamma away, and I wanted to go to my dormitory, to try and swallow down my horrible grief and vexation, which would show itself; while that horrible Mrs. Blunt—I won't call her anything else, for her husband's name was spelt without the "o," and he was a painter and glazier in Tottenham Court-road—that horrible Mrs. Blunt kept on saying that it was a very proper display of feeling, and did me great credit; and patting me on the back and calling me "my child," when all the time I could have boxed her ears well.

There I was, then, really and truly once more at school, and all the time feeling so big, and old, and cross, and as if I was being insulted by everything that was said to me. The last months I spent at Guisnes the sisters made pleasant for me by behaving with a kind of respect, and a sort of tacit acknowledgment that I was no longer a child; and, oh, how I looked back now upon those quiet, retired days! Of course they were *too* quiet and *too* retired; but then anything seemed better than being brought down here; while as to religion, the sisters never troubled themselves about my not being the same as themselves, nor tried to make a convert of me, nor called me heretic, or any of that sort of thing; though it was quite dreadful to hear Aunt Priscilla go on at papa when I was at home for the vacations, telling him it was sinful to let me be at such a place, and that it was encouraging the sisters to inveigle me into taking the veil; and that we should soon have the Papists overrunning the country, and re-lighting the fires in Smithfield, and all such stuff as that; while papa used very coolly to tell her that he most sincerely hoped that she would be the first martyr, for it would be a great blessing for her relatives.

That used to offend her terribly, and mamma

too; but it served her right for making such a fuss—the place being really what they called a pension, and Protestant and Catholic young ladies were there together, while plenty of them were English; and the old sisters were the dearest, darlinest, quietest, loveablest creatures that ever lived, and I don't believe they would have roasted a fly, much more an Aunt Priscilla.

* And there I was, then, though I could hardly believe it true, and was at school; and, as I said before, I wanted to get up to my dormitory. I said "my," but it was not all mine; for there were two more beds in the room. But as soon as I got up there, and was once more alone, I threw myself down upon my couch, and had such a cry. It was a treat, that was; for I don't know anything more comforting than a good cry. There's something softening and calming to one's bruised and wounded feelings; just as if nature had placed a reservoir of tears ready to gently flood our eyes, and act as a balm in times of sore distress. It was so refreshing and nice; and as I lay there in the bed-room, with the window open, and the soft summer breeze making the great cedar trees sigh, and the dimity curtains gently move, I gazed up into the bright blue sky till a veil seemed to come over my eyes, and I went fast asleep.

There I was in the train once more, with the eyes of that foreign-looking man regularly boring holes through my lids, until it was quite painful; for, being asleep, of course I kept them closely shut. It was like a fit of the nightmare; and as to this description, if I thought for a moment that these lines would be read by man—save and except the tradesmen engaged in their production—I would never pen them. But as the editor and publisher—I beg the editor's pardon,* I do not class him with the tradesmen—will be careful to announce that they are for ladies only, I write in full.

First of all the eyes seemed to be quite small, but, oh, so piercing; while I can only compare the sensation to that of a couple of beautiful, bright, precious stone seals, making impressions upon the soft wax of my brain. And they did, too—such deeply cut, sharp impressions as will never be effaced. Well, as I seemed to be sitting in the train, the eyes appeared to come nearer, and nearer, and nearer, till I could bear it no longer; and I

opened mine to find that my dream was a fact, and that there really were a pair of bright, piercing orbs close to mine, gazing earnestly at me, so that I felt that I must scream out; but as my lips parted to give utterance to a shrill cry, it was stayed, for a pair of soft, warm lips rested upon mine, to leave there a soft, tender kiss; and it seemed so strange that my dream should have been all true.

But, there, it was not all true; though I was awake and there were a pair of beautiful eyes looking into mine, and a pair of soft, red lips just leaving their impression; while, as I was fighting hard to recover my scattered senses, a sweet voice whispered—

"Don't cry any more, dear, please."

And then I saw through it all, for the dear girl who had just spoken was Clara Fitzacre; while just behind, and staring hard at me with her great, round, saucer eyes, was a fat, stupid-looking girl, whose name I soon learned was Martha Smith—red-faced and sleepy, and without a word to say for herself; while as for Clara, I felt to love her in a moment, she was so tender and gentle, and talked in such a consolatory strain.

"I'm so glad to find that you are to be in our room," said Clara, who was a tall, dark-haired, handsome girl. "We were afraid that it would turn out to be some cross, frumpy, stuck-up body, weren't we, Patty?"

"I'm sure I don't know," said the odious thing, whose words all sounded fat and sticky. "I thought you said you wouldn't have anybody else in our room. I wish it was tea-time."

"But I should not have said so if I had known who was coming," said Clara, turning very red. "But Patty has her wish, for it is tea-time; so sponge your poor eyes, and let me do your hair, and then we'll go down. You need not wait, Patty."

Patty Smith did not seem as if she wished to wait; for she gave a great, coarse yawn, for all the world like a butcher's daughter, and then went out of the room.

"She is so fat and stupid," said Clara, "that it has been quite miserable here; and I'm so glad that you've come, dear."

"I'm not," said I, dismally. "I don't like beginning school over again."

"But, then, we don't call this school," said Clara.

"But it is, all the same," I said.

"Oh, no," said Clara, kindly; "we only

* Granted.

consider that we are finishing our studies here, and there are such nice teachers."

"How can you say so!" I exclaimed. "I never saw such a set of ugly, old, cross-looking—"

"Ah, but you've only seen the lady teachers yet. You have not seen Monsieur Achille de Cochonet, and Signor Fazzoletto—such fine, handsome, gentlemanly men; and then there's that dear, good-tempered, funny little Monsieur de Kittville."

I could not help sighing as I thought of Mr. St. Purre, and his long, black, silky beard; and how nice it would have been to have knelt down and confessed all my troubles to him, and I'm sure I should have kept nothing back.

"All the young ladies are deeply in love with them," continued Clara, as she finished my hair; "so pray don't lose your heart, and make any one jealous."

"There is no fear for me," I said, with a deep sigh; and then, somehow or another, I began thinking of the church, and wondering what sort of a clergyman we should have, and whether there would be early services like there were at St. Vestment's, and whether I should be allowed to attend them as I had been accustomed. And then I sighed and shivered, while the tears filled my eyes; for it seemed that all the happy times of the past were gone for ever, and life was to be a great, dreary blank, full of horrible teachers and hard lessons. Though, now one comes to think of it, a life could not be a blank if it were full of anything, even though they were merely lessons.

I went down with Clara to tea, and managed to swallow a cup of the horribly weak stuff; but as to eating any of the coarse, thick bread and butter, I could not; though, had my heart been at rest, the sight of Patty Smith devouring the great, thick slices, as if she were absolutely ravenous, would have quite spoiled my repast. At first several of the pupils were very kind and attentive, but seeing how put out and upset I was, they left me alone till the meal was finished; while, though I could not eat, I could compare and think how different all this was from what I should have had at home.

After tea I was summoned to attend Mrs. Blunt in her study—as if the old thing ever did anything in the shape of study but how to make us uncomfortable, and how to make

money—and upon entering the place, full of globes, and books, and drawings, I soon found that she had put her good temper away with the cake and wine, as a thing too scarce with her to be used every day. The reason for my being summoned was that I might be examined as to my capabilities; and I found the lady principal sitting in state, supported by the Fraulein and two of the English teachers—Miss Furness and Miss Sloman.

I bit my lips as soon as I went in, for, I confess it freely, I meant to be revenged upon that horrible Mrs. Blunt for tempting mamma with her advertisement; and I determined that if she was to be handsomely paid for my residence at the Cedars, the money should be well earned. And now, once for all, let me say that I offer no excuse for my behaviour; while I freely confess to have been, all through my stay at the Cedars, very wicked, and shocking, and reprehensible.

"I think your mamma has come to a most sensible determination, Miss Bozerne," said Mrs. Blunt, after half an hour's examination. "What do you think, ladies?"

"Oh, quite so," chorused the teachers.

"Really," said Mrs. Blunt, "I cannot recall having had a young lady of your years so extremely backward."

And then she sat as if expecting that I should speak, as she played with her eyeglass, and occasionally took a glance at me; but I would not have said a word if they had pinched me.

"But I think we can raise the standard of your acquirements, Miss Bozerne. What do you say, ladies?"

"Oh, quite so," chorused the satellites, as if they had said it hundreds of times before; and I feel sure that they had.

"And now," said Mrs. Blunt, "we will close this rather unsatisfactory preliminary examination. You may retire, Miss Bozerne."

I was nearly at the door—glad to have it over, and to be able to be once more with my thoughts—when the old creature called me back.

"Not in that way, Miss Bozerne," she exclaimed, with a dignified, cold, contemptuous air, which made me want to slap her—"not in that way at the Cedars, Miss Bozerne. Perhaps, Miss Sloman, as the master of deportment is not here, you will show Miss Laura Bozerne the manner in which to leave

a room. Your education has been sadly neglected, my child."

This last she said to me with rather an air of pity, just as if I was only nine or ten years old; and, as a matter of course, as I was rather proud of my attainments, I felt dreadfully annoyed.

But my attention was now taken up by Miss Sloman, a dreadfully skinny old thing, in moustachios, who had risen from her seat, and began backing towards the door in an awkward way, like two clothes-props in a sheet, till she contrived to catch against a little papier maché work table and overset it, when, cross as I felt, I could not refrain from laughing.

"Leave the room, Miss Bozerne," exclaimed Mrs. Blunt, haughtily.

And of course I made my way out of the room to where Clara was waiting for me; and then we had a walk out in the grounds, with our arms round each other, just as if we had been friends for years; though you will agree that it was very likely I should cling to the first loveable thing which presented itself to me in my then forlorn condition.

TABLE TALK.

IN nearly every public print, we read accounts of the Duchess of Edinburgh—"the little Duchess." Her slight, small form is mentioned—her girlish look. She is spoken of as "petite," and so on. As it happened, we stood upon the platform at Paddington on her arrival on Thursday last, and saw her pass within three yards, and enter the carriage that was to take part in the procession. The reality, so far from being little or "petite," was tall and stately—her Majesty the Queen looking by her side little of stature.

COMPLAINTS ARE MADE about the slow way in which the Bengal Famine Relief Fund progresses at the Mansion House. This is nobody's fault but that of the richest City in the world, which in this case is stingy where it should be munificent, and bounteous where it might with wisdom play the mean. The Duke of Edinburgh has married the daughter of one of the wealthiest of monarchs—we will not be rude enough to ask about her dowry—and here, on the principle of "unto him that hath shall be given," the City votes three thousand gui-

neas for presentation plate to her Royal Highness. Would it not have been more gratifying to the Queen if this sum had been sent to her starving subjects far away?

IT IS SUGGESTED that the reason why, in spite of the number wounded in the advance of the 42nd Highlanders at Coomassie, so few received fatal injuries is, that the plan was adopted of leaving the kilt at home. While upon this topic, one is disposed to ask whether it would not have been better, instead of talking about treaties with the savage with whom we made war—as we showed him the meaning of time by the Black Watch—to have treated him to a chain—of anything but linked sweetness long drawn out.

A HINT for Mr. Sangster, or the Desideratum folk:—The last new thing in umbrellas, formed on the same lines as that presented to the Queen: The Calcalli, made in Coffee-coloured silk, easy to put up, in memory of the ease with which its namesake was put down.

ONE OF THE drollest parts of Tom Hood's "Comic Annual" this last season was the series of sketches by Gordon Thompson, illustrating the misfortunes of Tymkins, and the way in which his hats used to disappear from one of the clubs. We were reminded of it strongly the other day while waiting in the hall of a popular club. Having nothing better to do, we scanned the notice board, to find upon it no less than *nine* appeals to various unknowns to bring back the brown and green umbrellas that they had taken away by mistake. Let's see—parapluie, parasol, paravol: that will do. Cannot some one invent a new machine, to be called the paravol—a certain shelter from those ingenuous people who borrow our Gamps without the owners' consent?

Mr. TOOLE, before bidding farewell to what he would term "these festive shores," goes for a time to the Globe, apparently to get himself accustomed to a sphere ere, a star himself, he begins a journey to America, the land of the Stars—and Stripes.

Terms of Subscription to ONCE A WEEK, free by post:—Weekly Numbers for Six Months, 5s. 5d.; Monthly Parts, 5s. 8d.

ONCE A WEEK

NEW SERIES.

No. 327.

April 4, 1874.

Price 2d.

JACK'S SISTER; OR, WOMANLY PAST QUESTION.

CHAPTER XXII.

MRS. LOVEJOY STARTS A NEW IDEA.



It was just six days from Merle's arrival when he came downstairs, hat in hand, one afternoon as if going for a walk. The last of the library consultations had been held, the last of the business letters written that morning; and Merle's face, so pale usually, was flushed with something between agitated

joy and agitated pain, which gave a new character to the sharp, irregular features and great dark eyes.

It was over at last—the load of debt, the concealment, the avuncular wrath and punishment—over and ended so much more satisfactorily than his wildest hopes had ever anticipated, that it was little wonder if the face showed signs of the mind's relief, or if he walked with the lighter step of a man from whose shoulders a burden too heavy for his strength had been suddenly lifted. Even the remorseful recollection of Minnie's unknown grave beneath the river rushes failed for once to spoil his pleasure at returning to Oxford, no longer weighed down by debts which he had no prospect of paying, but in

a fair way to cast them off, and stand up a free man; not, indeed, without some self-sacrifice—but, let me tell you, the mere consciousness of some small sacrifice, willingly adopted, is in itself a pleasure to a man selfish by nature rather than by inclination; and Merle would have felt happier, and walked the house in a sweeter mood than he had known for months previously, had it not been for Miss Leyburn, and Miss Leyburn's tongue.

It had so long been a matter of course with Enid to make Merle her first thought, that she never thought of concealing her anxiety and depression during this week of his disgrace; nor would Miss Leyburn have thought of commenting on it had not Mrs. Lovejoy set her the example. That young matron was always scheming in her not over-wise head to provide suitable husbands for her favourite girl friends; and, having taken a special liking to the young lady at the Cedars, kept eager watch for the chance of seeing her united to a duplicate Lovejoy. Seeing Merle for the first time during this visit, she at once installed him in the place her busy fancy had left vacant, and burned to find out whether her suspicions were correct.

Fortune aided her. Miss Leyburn came to pay a long-deferred call on the curate's wife, and Mrs. Lovejoy seized an opportunity to remark that dear Miss Enid was looking rather pale lately, "very sweet, you know, but"—with an arch smile—"rather pensive and distraite."

Miss Leyburn sniffed testily, but answered with perfect unconsciousness—

"Yes, she is quite taken up with her cousin's future, the youth you met at our house on Friday. He—"

Mrs. Lovejoy interrupted the sentence by a little laugh, expressing full understanding of what was *not* meant.

"Ah! I thought her looking preoccupied, and guessed there was a cause; but I hope

there is no hitch. Is he not well off? Such a clever young man—quite a rising essayist, I hear, though Charlie says not half good enough for your niece; but then Charlie has taken such enthusiastic ideas about women since his marriage; and though Mr. Kinnardson is not strictly handsome, they say he is an immense favourite among the Oxford ladies.”

Miss Leyburn had sat staring during this speech as though some one were choking her. When it came to an end, for want of breath, the fingers on her throat seemed suddenly relaxed, and she burst out with—

“I really do not understand you. Do you mean to say you imagine there is anything between Merle Kinnardson and *my*—”

“Oh! dear, dear now”—(Mrs. Lovejoy could not have let any one finish to save her life)—“I am so sorry. Oh! please forgive me if I have been premature; but indeed I thought—and so did Charlie and my brother, Major Crawford—he was staying with us last week, you know, and was so much taken with Miss Enid Leyburn that—but after that evening at your house I said to him—

“‘Henry, I fear that is settled.’

“But indeed I don’t know why I said ‘fear,’ for I like Mr. Kinnardson; and I thought he seemed so—in fact, I took it as a settled thing; cousins, you know, and all so suitable; for didn’t some one say something about there being only one step between the cousin and the lover? and dear Charlie used to be so jealous of mine (cousins, I mean), though indeed I never cared a bit for Tom; but oh! I do hope I haven’t made mischief by speaking too soon; your niece will never forgive me; and indeed Charlie is always saying—

“‘My darling, your tongue runs away with you, it does really, pet.’”

“I’m sure I don’t know whether my niece will forgive you,” Miss Leyburn answered, taking advantage of the first full stop to speak with a caustic severity which crushed, without in the least convincing, little Mrs. Lovejoy. “I shall feel far from doing so, however, if I find that you mention such ridiculous ideas as these about Mr. Kinnardson in public. Allow me to tell you that if you think there is any love nonsense—ridiculous idea!—between my niece and her cousin, you are most entirely mistaken. I suppose you are unaware that they have been brought up together from babyhood, and that she looks on him as a younger

brother, and a very troublesome one, too. Suitable, indeed! Really, Mrs. Lovejoy, you must think her father and myself have very humble ideas to dream of bestowing Miss Enid Leyburn on an overgrown school-boy, without money, interest, or position. Lovers! Upon my word, if you have infected your husband and brother with any such absurd folly, I must beg you to contradict it as fully and firmly as possible.”

Miss Leyburn had talked herself into a passion, not a difficult feat with the irascible old lady; and Mrs. Lovejoy, frightened half out of her wits by the knitted brows and voice of wrath and scorn looming on her from her best sofa, assented at once, with many apologies for her mistake, and a mind more than ever convinced that she was right, and that Miss Leyburn’s anger rose simply from opposition to the match, on which the cousins had set their hearts.

“Poor young things!” she said to her husband, that night. “I’m afraid they will have a hard time of it with that horrid old maid. She is evidently dead against it, and Enid is so gentle that—really, *ducks*, I think we must help them. Suppose I induce her to spend a day here, and you contrive to bring Mr. Kinnardson to *dine* and take her home? Charlie, if it’s *not* settled already, what a delightful opportunity it would be!”

“Very delightful, darling,” said Mr. Lovejoy, rather carelessly; “but, on the whole, I don’t know but what I think Miss Leyburn would be rather wasted on her cousin; and—”

“Charlie!” Mrs. Lovejoy cried, “how very unkind you are! I’m sure she’s as fond as fond of him, and isn’t that enough? There is always one nicer than another in marriage; and, indeed, Aunt Barbara used even to say that *you* were not to be compared to—”

“Well, Emily? Pray finish.”

Mr. Lovejoy had anything but a pleased expression of face. His wife saw her mistake, and hastened to set matters right.

“My lovey-dovey, she would have said the same of an archangel if he had wanted to marry me. But now don’t be cross about poor Mr. Kinnardson. He mayn’t be rich, but I’m sure his manners are charming—so quiet and courteous; and if *she* likes him—”

“If she likes him, my dear, she’ll marry him without our putting our fingers in the

pie. I've no wish, I can tell you, to quarrel with the principal people in the place, for a sentimental notion."

"Charlie! is that the way you talk of your Emily's ideas?"

"My darling, your ideas are charming; only please don't ruin me by acting on them."

"We will drop the subject, Mr. Lovejoy. You evidently are not capable of understanding my feelings on such points."

"With all my heart, poppet. Suppose we attempt what I do understand—going to sleep?"

Silence fell within the chamber.

Miss Leyburn passed that night in a very disturbed state of mind. Indignantly as she scouted the idea of any sentiment besides brotherhood and sisterhood between Merle and Enid, that idea, once planted, would not be driven away; and as even the most suspicious nature could not fail to see how perfectly innocent Enid was of any such interpretation of her conduct, Miss Leyburn fastened on Merle as the person in fault, and bitterly inveighed against him in the secrecy of her heart. She had never taken to the young gentleman; had resented his adoption in the family; and only forced herself to treat him with decent kindness from a sense of right and principle. Kindness constrained by duty is, however, seldom pleasant, and still more seldom productive of affection in return. Merle, keenly sensitive on such points, knew Miss Leyburn disliked him; and, heartily returning the feeling, avoided speaking, or even being in her society more than was absolutely necessary, and was consequently set down by her as stupid, morose, and unsociable—a "sulky boy," who took up Enid's time, was a burthen on the family, and gave them nothing in return. Now Mrs. Lovejoy had laid the train of a new current of ideas, and all previous strictures on poor Merle became grey in comparison with the utter blackness in which he was now enveloped.

She could not, and did not, believe that the iniquity of thinking of his cousin in any other light than a most undeservedly kind sister had ever occurred to the unhappy young Oxonian; and therefore resolved to be careful not to suggest it—"put it into his head," as she said—by so much as a hint. But she hated him for even being accused of such presumption; and accord-

ingly made her manner towards him so caustic and repellent that even Jack noticed it, and all Merle's gentlemanly sense of the outward respect due to Miss Leyburn's age and sex was needed to keep him silent under the sting of her rudeness that day. True, Enid warded off all she could of it; but Aunt Jane noticed all her niece's efforts at peacemaking with renewed displeasure; and, feeling herself in the wrong, went to bed in a thoroughly bad humour with herself and all about her.

She had never kissed Enid so coldly; and Jack observed that "Aunt Jenny seemed rather out of sorts to-day," and privately wondered whether Baby Delamayne would ever have to endure such little ebullitions of temper. He thought he should speak his mind to the old lady if it were so. Enid lifted sweet eyes of apology to Merle; and said, as she bade him good night, that "poor auntie must be unwell; that walk in the morning had tired her; he mustn't mind." And her heart went out in grateful admiration of his patience when he told her all he minded was seeing her vexed. Nevertheless, Merle hated Miss Leyburn; and had he guessed what was in her thoughts, would very probably have begun to carry it out from sheer opposition to her wishes alone.

No man likes being snubbed, least of all by a woman, whose sex prevents retaliation. The crime becomes cowardly under such circumstances; and Merle was the last person likely to pardon cowardice—in another.

On the following day, when Mr. Leyburn and Jack were gone for a ride, Merle came downstairs, as we have seen; and being in search of Enid, stepped into the breakfast-room—where, as ill-luck would have it, Miss Leyburn was sitting alone, hunting for a receipt in her cookery book.

"I beg your pardon," he said, civilly, and retreating before her upward frowning glance—"I was looking for Enid. Do you know where she is?"

"No," Aunt Jane answered, sharply, "I do not. What do you want her for?"

"To take a walk. She said she would be ready by three; and it's a lovely afternoon."

"I think Enid is busy," said Miss Leyburn—who, by the way, thought nothing of the kind. "And I don't see why you can't walk about by yourself, Merle. You are really

getting too old to be always tied to Enid's apron string."

Merle's face paled with anger; still he shut his lips, and made no reply.

Miss Leyburn went on—

"You might sometimes consult her inclinations instead of your own. How do you know if she cares to be for ever trotting about with you?"

Young Kinnardson laughed, almost contemptuously.

"How do I know? By my own wishes, Aunt Jane. Enid's have been mine, and mine Enid's, for the last thirteen years. She is not likely to change now."

Had Merle been set to find a speech which would sting Miss Leyburn's present state of mind, I doubt if he could have succeeded better. Miss Leyburn had gone to sleep on the previous night, comforting herself by the reflection that he was going away in a few days, and must stay away until he had taken his degree; after which a judicious hint to Mr. Leyburn would easily induce that gentleman to place his nephew at a considerable distance from Marston Fallows, and to find him occupation which should prevent his returning to the latter place till Enid was married and settled. It all looked very feasible; and, pleased by her own mental diplomacy, Miss Leyburn determined to neither do nor say anything which could put the young people on their guard, or invest their mutual affection with a halo of sentiment or martyrdom. Alas! Merle's speech, identifying himself with Enid, upset in one moment all her wise intentions; and she retorted, with a bitterness which startled her auditor—

"Then it is high time for her to do so, and for you to follow her example. I am not going to have Enid talked about, and all her prospects in life spoiled by your selfishness in imposing on her good nature—you, of all people, too, who ought to try and repay your uncle's generosity by humility and consideration."

"Enid talked about!" said Merle. Unlike Mrs. Lovejoy, he seldom interrupted any one, though these words almost swept away what followed. "I do not know what you mean."

"Then you must be uncommonly dense," retorted Miss Leyburn, too angry for thought. "If you are thinking yourself old enough to be admired by Oxford ladies"—with a sneer—"you are old enough to give up play-

ing at childish innocence and babyish habits at home. I am not going to have people fancying that you and Enid are in l——"

Here a sudden pause; for Merle had started a little, a strange expression flashing up into his face: a look so new to Miss Leyburn that she instinctively shrank from it, and could have bitten out her tongue at the remembrance of her own imprudence.

"It isn't worth while going on," she resumed, after a minute's effort at rallying herself, "or repeating the absurd, impossible, and far-fetched rubbish which gossiping people can easily make out of youthful folly and thoughtlessness. You are going away in a day or two, and I do not suppose you will ever be much here again; for though my brother kindly aids you in completing your University career, he will expect, as the least return for such indulgence, that you take your degree and get a tutorship or something, till you are old enough to be ordained. You can't expect to be carried in arms all your life."

"Not in yours, certainly," Merle put in with a quiet sarcasm which made the slim—and, to speak truth, bony—members alluded to quiver with anger. "Indeed, if you will allow me to say so, I should desire such a cradle even less than I expect it."

"It is no use being impertinent, Merle," said Miss Leyburn, forcing herself to speak calmly. "I am only telling you this out of kindness, and for your own sake. You will probably be settled many miles from here, and Enid married to some one or other in her own state of life before another year is over. You cannot expect her then to be always thinking of, and working for, and writing to you, as at present. Her husband would not allow her to be such a slave, even if she wished it herself; but she would not. New duties bring new ties; and you had better leave off hanging on her in good time, and accustom yourself to look for only the same cousinly kindness that other men in your position would get. I am not going to have Enid annoyed by unfounded and humiliating gossip."

"Thank you for your advice, Miss Leyburn," said Merle, ill-repressed anger and not at all repressed contempt struggling in his face, with that gleam of something else which Miss Leyburn had seen before. "As, however, my cousin is considerably dearer to me than anybody else, I think I am as competent as any one to protect her

from the chance of being annoyed by 'unfounded and humiliating gossip.' For the present, seeing that she is *not* married to some one in her own state of life, nor I settled many miles from here, perhaps you will allow us to go for our walk as we originally intended. Discussions of this kind, however entertaining, are rather a waste of time on such a fine afternoon as this. Don't you think so?"

He took up his hat again as he spoke, and finding no reply—for Miss Leyburn merely sniffed the feeling of wrath which words were powerless to express—left the room with a slight bow, and ran downstairs.

Perhaps now you will understand the mingling of emotions in his face, which I remarked before.

Enid was waiting for him in the hall, ready equipped in sealskin jacket and trim felt hat. The bright look of peace in her face, so innocent of the bickering which had called her name into mention, smote on her cousin like a sunbeam after thunder, and instinctively brought a smile to his lips.

"Have you been waiting long, Enid? I am so sorry."

"Only a minute or two, dear. Poor Mrs. Gurton's grandchild came for some more of that liniment for her husband's rheumatism; and I had to look for the prescription before dressing. And then I had a post-card from Mr. Lovejoy, asking me if I would go to the schools on Wednesday instead of Thursday this week, as Miss Brock is obliged to go up to London."

"You busy little woman! What a perfect parson's wife you would make!" Merle said, his tones half dreamy, half earnest.

She laughed out—

"Yes, shouldn't I?—You will have to look out a model parson for me among your clerical brethren some day, Merle. Mind he is very nice."

"Would you trust the choosing in my hands then, Enid?"

"Why not?" She did not perceive the "intention," as the French have it, in his tone, and answered gaily. "Who should know better than you my tastes and requirements? Only he must promise not to part his hair down the middle, and not to call me 'ducksey' or 'poppet,' as Mr. Lovejoy calls his wife."

Merle made no reply. Miss Leyburn's hints were still rankling in his brain; and the old love for Enid, fighting with the new idea

of separation, kept him silent. She looked up in his face, and grew grave too.

"Let us go along the towing-path," she said, gently. "I am only joking till we get out of the town. I want to talk sense instead; or rather, I want to hear you talk. I know it is all settled at last, and you are going back to Oxford; but Jack said you would tell me the particulars. He was in too great a hurry to carry off papa. I fancy he has something of his own to consult him about."

"Ah! I thought he seemed rather absent, as if he had something on his mind this time. If it were possible to Jack"—and Merle laughed—"I should almost have thought he had fallen in love with some one."

"How quick you are!" Enid began; then stopped short, her eyes dancing, but her mouth grave; and added, rather hesitatingly—"Well, I have thought so too; but that is only between ourselves, for Jack has said nothing about it, and until he does I think he would like us to keep our guesses in our own heads. Don't let us even talk about it to one another—shall we, Merle? Tell me of yourself instead."

"There isn't much to tell, little woman. You know, of course, your father's kindness and generosity to me?"

His face flushed at the remembrance of Miss Leyburn's taunts; but he said the words firmly.

"No, Merle. Don't tell me unless you quite like. He will never do so, I'm sure."

"My dear girl, I like telling you everything; and I can't be grateful enough to your father. I suppose you know this, that dear Aunt Mary brought him £2,000 at her marriage, and £2,000 more on her father's death?"

"Yes."

"The first was settled on her children. Not so the second: and she had a fancy that, as it would have come to my mother if her father had not died in anger with her, it ought to descend to me. Very sweet and loving of her, Enid; but a mere woman's fancy, you know, and one that most husbands would not have listened to for a moment. Uncle John behaved differently. From the time of her death he has, without my knowledge, made over that £2,000 to my name, invested it in 5 per cent. consols, and regularly spent the interest on my education. That would be generous enough,

but it's not all. Wishing me to have the same advantages as Jack at college, he yet wouldn't touch the capital, but added another hundred of his own; so that when I left Oxford I should find myself, not penniless, as I always expected, but with a hundred a year to begin with. What do you think of that?"

"Dear papa," said Enid, very pleased, but not at all surprised. "I always knew that you would get taken care of; but—Merle, you don't speak gladly."

"How can I, when I think what sort of a return I have been making? It would have served me right and been kind enough if my uncle had contented himself with paying my debts out of the capital, and turning me off with the remainder to find for myself as I could, at Oxford or elsewhere. Many men would have done less than that."

"Papa is not many men, Merle. Tell me how it is settled."

"Thus. I shall go back to college to-morrow, and pay my debts out of the capital, my uncle continuing to allow me £200 a year, as before, till I am started in the world for myself. He gave me the choice between this and paying by instalments."

"You chose rightly, Merle. Did he not tell you so?"

"Yes, I believe so. It makes an awful hole in my capital, though—nearly a quarter; but I thought it best to pay the hanged things and be done with them."

"Of course it was best. You could never feel happy while you are in debt. Then—now, dear Merle—why do you look so grave? Papa has forgiven it all—he said so, and you are going to make all the amends you can. What else troubles you?"

"Do you want to know?"

"Of course I do. Go on."

"Will you come to the cloisters, then, Enid?"

"The cloisters! Why?"

"That I may tell you. I can't here."

SCENTED WITH LAVENDER.

DEATH THE TERRIBLE.

A PATCH of turquoise blue, above a crumbling, sun-baked, yellow wall; a grey cat, with blinking green eyes, on the top of the said wall; a tuft of dark-red wallflowers, with one broken twig swaying backwards and forwards in the warm noon-day breeze—so much and no more I see

from the semi-cool depths of my chintz-covered pillows. How hot it is everywhere, and how still! Not a sound but the drowsy ticking of the kitchen clock below; not a cloudlet on that bit of dazzling blue; not a flicker in Grimalkin's lashes. The very flies speckling yonder yellow wall seem to have got tired of buzzing round, and to have settled down for their noonday sleep. Will that restless branch of orange-coloured blossoms never leave off flapping to and fro against the dusty bricks; never tire of bruising the bright petals, and battering the pale stem? For more than an hour it has never ceased to beat against the cruel wall, till now the stalk is nearly cut through, and the tuft of green and gold dangles by one torn fibre. If I could rise, I would stretch out my hand to pluck the poor mutilated flower out of its agony, and put it in this glass of cold (no, tepid) water beside me; but, alas! that is out of my power, and—

There! one last heave, and in a moment spray and flower gone, fluttering down on to the hot pavement of the courtyard. Pussy opens her eyes, stretches her round neck, and goes to sleep again. The flies rise into the air in a tiny black cloud, and then settle back. There is a glimmer of something green on the dusty flags below, and all is quiet and at rest.

Rest! What a wonderful thing it is! Fancy such a trifle as that having power to disturb one, or a feeling of peace coming over the mind with that motionless sprig of gaudy blossoms in the courtyard. Perhaps it is only the fretful irritability of sickness; or perhaps my inborn dislike to the sight of suffering, which makes me breathe more freely now that flower is gone. Better it should drop and die, and fade away under the warm, blue sky, than go on beating out a bruised, mangled life against the unyielding stones. Better for us, far better, to drop and die, and be at rest, rather than go on struggling and fighting for a brief day more of life—a handful of toilsome, weary existence.

The philosophers of the first French Revolution christened death "an eternal sleep." The Arabs of the desert have an old proverb, "Man is better sitting than standing, lying down than sitting, dead than lying down." The Pagans of Greece and Rome carved beautiful marble figures of sleep over the doors of their mausoleums, and

bore their dead crowned with myrtle and attended by soft music to the grave. Indians and savages, whose whole life is a struggle and a battle, not alone with their own race, but with the beasts of the forest, and even Nature herself, sit down in calm, uncomplaining placidity to await the approach of death. Why is it, I wonder, that among Christians only, and more especially Christians of our own day, the physician of all our ills should be regarded as a King of Terror; and the one natural, imperative, immutable, and universal ending to every life, good or bad, pleasant or painful, should be shunned, ignored, and dreaded with a childish terror—a shrinking repugnance and loathing far beyond that awakened by the direst pains or punishment of existence?

We all know that, at best, life is a short and difficult journey. We all long now and then for the fulfilment of that verse, so dear to many an aching, tired heart, "Where the wicked cease from troubling and the weary are at rest." We actually, in the Burial Service, do thank God for delivering our brothers from the miseries of this world. We are fretted by unkindness, chafed by poverty, martyred by bodily suffering; and yet—yet we cling to life as if the mere fact of existence were as great a blessing to be desired as dissolution is a curse to be feared and avoided. And not only young and thoughtless people, but grown men and women—Christians, strong and sensible in all else, suffering, world-worn human beings—all, or nearly all, share this strange, irrational perversity.

Why on earth should this be? God knows, not I; and yet, if you won't be shocked, I fancy, do you know, that it is greatly owing to our pastors and masters, and to the teachings instilled into us from our earliest infancy. Every member of the English Church is taught to thank God for his, or her, "creation, preservation," &c., and to pray that this preservation may be, among other evils, from "sudden death." Well, in my heart of hearts, I never say either prayer without a mental negative both against the blessing and the punishment aforementioned. We thank God for our creation. Yes, and perhaps it is as well to do so, for it is His work, and "all the works of the Lord are good;" but we should thank Him equally for our extinction. Had we never been created we should have lost nothing, for we should never have been

cognizant of anything to lose. We should have suffered nothing, neither sinned nor sorrowed. No ill could ever have come to us, for we should never have been. Now, with our creation, we are indeed given the chance of a bliss beyond all human ken; but that bliss is only to be purchased by a life of toil and pain—can only be reached through the merciful gates of Death; and yet we cry out at its approach, and fret and struggle and fight for a few days more of an existence which must come to an end some day, and which, at the best, is but a poor foretaste of the joy in store for us.

What fools we must be!

Well, but sudden death? Oh, yes, I'll tell you what made me think of that. Nothing more nor less than a couple of prints which decorate the drab-coloured walls of this apartment. The first (I dare say you've seen it in many a shop window) is called "After the Battle"—a summer evening, with a calm, sunny sky, a bit of roadside beside a trampled corn field, a dead soldier lad lying across the footway, with a peasant girl holding his head on her knee, and looking down half wonderingly, half pityingly, on the white, upturned face.

That's all, and I dare say you know it by heart; but it brought the words "battle and murder, and sudden death" into my head; and as in a vision I seemed to see that soldier boy one short hour before. He is full of health, and strength, and youthful energy. His pulse is beating quick, his veins glowing with pleasure and excitement. Before, behind, around him on every side, tramp—stern and steady—a thousand gallant men; all wearing the same livery, all marching under the same flag, all bent on one and the same object—Death! death to another or themselves. Above, the sun shines calmly down on them from a fair, blue summer sky, without speck or spot to mar its dazzling purity. Below, from the corn-brake at their feet, a lark soars, singing jubilantly, from his soon-to-be-trampled nest. One of the men looks after the bird with a half-sigh, and turns to our lad, saying—

"Do you remember the lark's nest we found in the old farm meadow, Jack? when you were courting little Nellie. That was a pleasant day, wasn't it, old fellow?"

"Ay, that was a pleasant day," and pleasanter yet followed it; and yet, bright as they were, Jack has left them all for this. Perhaps never in his whole life has he felt

gladder, prouder—even better than now, when marching at the head of his regiment to the battle whose end is death. He even laughs, as he nods his head in assent; and then, in the very act—before he can even speak—a tiny puff of white smoke bursts out of a thicket hard by; there is a sharp “*thring*” in the air, and—the lad is gone! fallen flat on his face; shot through the heart; dead at—nay, under—the very feet of the friend he was addressing. Lift him up now, little peasant girl, if you will. You may come out safely; for they have all passed on. No one flagging, no one even looking behind for the gap in ranks soon to be so terribly thinned. “Poor Jack! he’s gone.” That is all—and what more would you have, after all? Yes, raise the young head, stroke back the sunny curls, wipe the dust gently from the white face, and there it lies before you, bright with the same careless smile it last wore in life—a smile graven for all eternity on the marble features.

That is sudden death!

I’ll turn round on my sofa now, please. Slowly, for I’m not very strong; but I want to show you the other picture—a darkened room, with a curtained bed, on which lies the wasted figure of a dead man—a clergyman standing by—a doctor putting up his watch—a weeping widow being led from the room by her daughters and friends. A very lugubrious subject; but I mean to go back an hour there, and enter the sick room. There on the soft, shadowed couch, lies a poor fevered, half-delirious wretch, struggling vainly with the bitter bodily pain which even clouds his mind with semi-insanity. He is apparently a Christian, a tolerably good, well-meaning man; but he knows there is not one day of his life which has gone down pure and unsullied to the Eternal record. He knows too that his time for better doing is over. He is dying. His friends cluster round the bed, weeping and bewailing. A minister of God prays, and warns and reminds him of the terrors of the fast approaching death, unless he “be perfect, even as his Father in heaven is perfect.” The doctor taxes every nerve, and adds doubly and trebly to his sufferings by striving to keep alive the poor flickering flame of existence. And yet, he cannot live. He cannot move, or think, or even pray. He knows death is dreadful, because he has dreaded it all his life: dreaded it so much that he has put the

very idea of it away from him; but he never thought it would come yet awhile. He has been ill so long, has suffered so much, is so weak and worn—how can he pray and repent now, when even to hear what the parson says is wearisome and painful? He struggles against the awful hand, already touching him. He moans. He even weeps. He is sinking from sheer vital exhaustion; and yet the good clergyman presses him. “Does he believe, does he repent?” “Yes, yes,” to both; but why, or what, he neither knows nor cares. A merciful torpor is numbing his poor, suffering, fearful soul. His head drops back, and—all is over! The pastor says, “A beautiful end. Our poor friend died in the act of professing his faith and contrition.” The relations creep weeping from the room, unnerved by the sight of that pitiful, lingering struggle; and yet—a few hours and even those deep lines of fear and suffering which had seemed graven on the dead face are gone. Death, so long in coming, has wiped all away with a kindly, careful finger; and the man who has died a lingering death of sickness and disease lies there calm and peaceful as that soldier lad in his bloody grave far away. Was his death any the happier? Do you think those hours of agony and weakness made him more fit to meet his Maker than the blow which at one sharp stroke severed the life-thread of that young man?

God forbid! Were we to think so in sober earnest, we should actually accuse the Author of Justice of an act more heartlessly unjust than the worst of men would show to a fellow-creature. Our Lord holds in his hands the Keys of Life or Death. His fingers turn either lock at the very moment He wills, and has willed from all eternity; and it would be absurd to suppose that, were a long lingering death necessary to man’s eternal salvation, He, in whose power alone it lies to give or withhold, would bestow it capriciously on this or that one, while scores and tens of scores are daily hurried out of the world at a moment’s notice.

Perhaps some of you have read Defoe’s “History of the Plague in London,” or Harrison Ainsworth’s painful and repulsive picture of the same period. I have never chanced to see the former, and the latter is of course only a romance; yet I fancy it must come very near the truth, for it has been my fate to be in a great city during a

like time of pestilence; and I remember well how the bravest men shrank and cowered under the terrible hand of death then raised visibly above them.

I can see it now, the long, fierce summer days, with the thermometer at 90° in the shade; and never a breath of coolness even at night—the white, bald sun glaring down day after day out of a blue, bright, blazing vault, without one fleck of white to break its dazzling, horrible beauty—the hot, white haze in the air; the hot, white houses, closed and shuttered, and empty; the hot, white streets, with blades of grass cropping up here and there through the dust; the liquid, glassy furnace of water, flowing like a fiery girdle round three sides of the doomed city. I see more—I see the constant stream of carriages, carts, and every vehicle that can be pressed into the service, carrying men, women, and children away out into the suburbs, the green, leafy Paso del Molino; or the rocky seaside Buçeo; and I see them taking the pestilence with them to those same rural refuges, and there dying by tens and twenties in a day, unnursed, undoctored, without even the comforts they might have had in their city home. Aye, dying in such numbers that the very orange groves and vineyards become poisoned; and “quintas” and rose-gardens are turned into graveyards to hold the hastily interred dead. I see the white, anxious faces of men and women, the terrible black cross marking nine out of every ten doors, the ceaseless funerals streaming outwards to the great plague pits opened below the speedily filled to overflowing Campo Santo.

I see all this, and leaning on my elbow, I hear the heavy roll of the hearse or ambulance, going from house to house; the constant dull tolling of the passing bell, the crackling of the great fires burning at every second or third crossing in the streets. . . . Oh, those fires! To my mind they were more melancholy than anything else; for in the midst of that fervid summer heat they flared and blazed and threw a red, lurid light into houses where husband, wife, and children lay dead or dying; while huge columns of black smoke rose into the sultry air, and hung like a funeral pall over the scorched and panting city. Why, even the little Spanish Gavroches, who would play at leaping through the smoking piles, shrieking and laughing like so many dusky imps—even they felt the influence of the time; for in

a country and a season where they usually almost live on fruit and vegetables, I have seen a huge bunch of purple, luscious grapes left on our window-sill, and lying there untouched until carried away by the “basureros” or dustmen next morning. Indeed, there was an edict against the sale of every fruit or green thing whatsoever; and people who could hardly bear the sight of meat constrained themselves to live on that and bread in the time when death would follow within a couple of hours after partaking of an apple or a slice of melon.

A couple of hours! Yes, that was the general duration of the sickness at the worst time; and often people sickening at their villas, a mile or two outside the town, died in the carriage which was conveying them to their city home. In those days many fled from their nearest relatives. Women forsook their posts as nurses, and left their fellow-women to be cared for by men, or God. Men themselves died—aye, dozens of them—from sheer fright, terror, nothing more; and that was what I wanted to remark to you. Fear, the fear of death, was actually in nearly half the cases the primary cause of disease—the actual harbinger of death itself! Most people, as I have said, fled out of town, and in many cases never returned. Of those who remained, scarcely one family out of five but had lost one member. Many and many perished all together. We, a family of ten, stayed all through, in the very heart of the city; and never one of us had a day's sickness from first to last.

The fact was we had no fear of death. We certainly obeyed one or two simple rules, to live plainly and to avoid unnecessary infection, but that was all; and we neither talked nor worried ourselves about what might be—the best rule of all; for Death, finding himself no object of dread, stayed away. And we went quietly through that terrible time, saddened indeed, but scarcely even unnerved by the horrible sights and panic-stricken faces around us.

Now I look back on those days with a sort of reverent awe; for I see that even such a time of trouble was sent in the mercy and wisdom of a God who saw that it was needed; that it was the fast-livers, the dissolute, and the pleasure-seekers, whose own souls had made death a terror to them, that were the first to be called away—the *very* ones for whom, from the

beginning of this special disorder, there was no hope. I saw a civil war which had raged for years quenched in the common danger. I saw cleanliness for dirt, order for disorder; a fresher, purer, brighter city rising from out of the desolation of the old.

"Oh! not in cruelty, not in wrath

The reaper came that day.

'Twas an angel visited this green earth,
And took the flowers away."

If we could only look on him as an "angel" always! But, alas! the bravest and coolest of us lack courage to welcome him when he comes, not for us, but our dear ones. We know it may be well for them; we may even know that they are ready and willing to go; but which of us can bear to loose their hand, and bid them "God speed" on their dark and lonely journey?

"He giveth His beloved sleep." Yes, even so; but, oh, the agony of watching the approach of that sleep in one near and dear to us; the double agony when it is spreading its dark shadow over a young and helpless child! You look surprised at that, and say, "But surely we can better afford to lose a baby than those older and longer with us?" Perhaps so; and yet to *me* the first grief is, if shorter, by far the sharper of the two; for we know that death may come as a punishment to a sinner, or a blessing to a saint. We may also feel that it would be cruel to grudge the old and weak, the worn and weary, from their eternal rest. There are even those in some families (God grant they be not many) whose lives are such that, to those who love them best, death seems the only hope, the only haven for them. But how can we say this of a little infant—a creature so small, so innocent, so helpless; called into the world only to be reclaimed; given a few brief hours of baby life, and snatched away just as it has nestled itself into our heart of hearts? . . . And the worst of it is, we can do so little for them. Our love is so impotent either to succour or to save.

For elder people we can read or pray. They tell us their needs, and we minister to them; their sufferings, and we sympathize; their last wishes, and we take a sad pleasure in carrying them out. But what of all this can we do for a little baby, one's very own child, whose tiny life seems bound up and centred in the love we lavish upon it?

Oh! ask any mother who has lost an infant what it is to sit by and see it suffer and

die, without her being able to know the extent of its pain, or even how to alleviate it; and with no guide, no help, but the little, feeble wail, growing fainter and fainter as the hours crawl slowly by; to see the baby fingers which used to creep so warmly round her neck now hanging stiff and nerveless in her clasp; the pouting, rosebud mouth, which has clung to hers many a time and oft, in many a shower of kisses, growing cold and pale as stone; the bright, round eyes, which used to laugh up into hers at first awakening, fixed and fading, without one responsive gleam to all her tenderness; the little cherub body so wasted that even *her* arms are too hard a resting place; the dimpled knees and crumpled rosy feet—feet which used to nestle in her palm, and which have been kissed and caressed, aye, every crease and dimple in them, many and many a time, stiffened, and rigid, and cold—so cold that not all her tender chafing, her passionate kisses, her burning, blinding tears can ever warm them to life again. Oh, baby, baby! if ever one felt tempted to rebel against the Father of all, or to distrust His love, it was when one saw you—so tiny, so innocent—suffering and dying, for what?—what end? or when, in the utter bitterness of one's spirit, one laid down the little marble body, thankful only that all *was* over—that there was nothing more to endure; and hard and resentful in spirit because an all-wise God has seen fit to inflict pain which we would have given our own lives to avert, to lend us a little life, and reclaim it before spot or stain has soiled its purity—before it has done aught but open our hearts, and draw forth the purest love of our natures.

Do not mistake me. Do not imagine that as time went on I did not grow to recognize the hidden love which I denied then; to see that it was "well with the child," to fold my hands in heartfelt thankfulness that it had been taken from the evil to come. Yes, I lie here now, and, looking beyond that little mound of grassy turf, can see the cherub face not pinched by suffering as when it last lay on my breast; but bright with glory unspeakable, shining down upon me from the blue above, a living witness of our Father's love—a link, perhaps the strongest, too often the only one, between me and Heaven. There are far worse ways of losing those dear to us than death; and only those who have experienced the secret shame, the unutterable sorrow of that bitter truth, will

know that it is no exaggeration when I say that there is many a loving, passionate heart which has cried out to God in anguish that its darling was not then lying dead at his feet, rather than living and yet lost, that would sooner see its idol cold and lifeless in the grave than know it is as it is—a god of brass and clay! And how many—how many a sinful, unhappy creature has been stayed in his or her downward path by the thought of some lost one whose memory alone is powerful to stay the act which might have shut them from each other for all eternity.

But I have a friend who does not believe in this reunion of hearts in another world; who quotes the old question of the Disciples to our blessed Lord about the woman with seven husbands, and has no hope of re-joining those she loves best in heaven. Now, what shall we say for such as she? What consolation has death for these? Verily, verily, I know of none; for of all grief theirs seems to me the sorest. And well, indeed, may the poet say that “a sorrow’s crown of sorrow is remembering happier things,” if each memory of the loved one must bring with it the agonizing thought that we have lost him for all eternity; that our goodness, our tenderness, our close, clinging love for one another is only so much passion wasted and thrown away. It is not true. It is a lie to say it; worse than idiocy to believe it. *Somewhere*—in the Christian’s heaven, the “happy hunting grounds,” the “grand peut-être” of that unknown future of ours—we shall rise, and we shall meet again. Instinct tells it, nature proves it; and instinct and nature never lie. Does a seed *die* when we put it in the ground? Does a dragon-fly’s grub raise a mighty bewailing before he goes to sleep in his chrysalis shell? I hope he is not such a fool. No; it is only *we*, we who see the exquisite brilliancy of the perfect insect, and inhale the perfume of the full-blown flower—we, who are reserved for the supreme folly of growling and grumbling all through the period of our grub existence, only to growl and grumble doubly when the hour for the supreme change draws nigh; to stand shivering and shaking outside the palace doors, because, forsooth, the tiny passage between us and them is dark, and the crossing it will take us—how long? One minute or one half-second?

Put religion aside altogether, and yet

answer me—are we not a brave and enlightened generation? or is there any folly like to our folly in this one thing?

ONLY A YEAR.

CHAPTER V.

“WHAT WILL YOU GIVE ME FOR THIS PRETTY THING?”

THE wind had gone down in the morning; but snow was everywhere falling steadily and silently, eight or nine inches deep on the ground, and many a drift in lanes and hollows.

Phillis came down to breakfast in her habit, at a summons from a maid. She found Mr. Thyrlé in a large room; he was standing beside a roaring fire. A small, elderly woman, with a hard, lined face, keen eyes, and hands which had known other work than pouring out tea in earlier days, sat before a steaming urn at the head of the table.

Thyrlé came forward to shake hands with Phillis, and to make some rather anxious inquiries as to her health, her rest, &c. Then—

“This is my aunt, Miss Mason, Miss Kyriel,” he said.

And Miss Mason got up and responded to Miss Kyriel’s graceful bend of her stately head by a quick, jerky little bob.

“Now, Archer,” exclaimed this old person, her speech principally made up of what Phillis mistook for Scotch, but which was the vernacular of her native county—“breakfast’s bin ready this half-hour. Sit ye down, Miss Kyriel.”

Phillis took the chair Mr. Thyrlé placed for her, and began to apologize, fearing she was late.

“Late, say ye?” repeated Miss Mason, in an irate tone. “It was not you I was thinking of, but him. Late? We’re gaily airy this morning, I’m thinkin’, thanks to you. Order virtuals at what hour I will, he’s never in at the reet time. Twice labour, double washin’, he mak’s. But he has no manners. Yesterneet—oh, fair and all—he promised to be back to dine at six. Lord knows what time he cam’ hame—nigh ’leven o’clock, I heerd tell. And he ca’s them manners!”

Miss Kyriel, keeping strict control over her face, knew that Thyrlé was watching it. She resolutely looked towards the wizened

little countenance of the speaker, keeping her eyes principally on a red flower which adorned the border of Miss Mason's cap.

"We lost the way last night," she ventured.

"Wa-ay!" echoed Miss Mason, in scorn, as if it were the idlest and most futile of excuses. "What for sud he go sec a daft gate? What for sud the like o' him go huntin' and gaddin'? I think nowt o' sec feckless wark. What for sudn't he look arter business, as his father did afore him? My jings! it's puir, shiftless manners—"

"Be so good as to pour out the coffee," interrupted Thyrle, in a freezingly polite tone.

A glance at his face showed Phillis a vision of what he might be if sufficiently aroused. She saw a clouded, lowering brow, stern lines about the mouth, and eyes not absolutely flashing, but lighted angrily. Miss Mason also glanced at him, and collapsed for a time into utter silence.

"He is master here, it seems," thought Phillis; and she began to address to him a few remarks about their late adventure, and her hopes that he had not suffered from the sacrifice of his coat. And he told her that he was afraid she must remain here a prisoner, at least until to-morrow. Men were employed in cutting away a very deep drift on the Hallingford-road, but he thought the way would not be passable until to-morrow at the earliest. He would send a groom on foot, if Miss Kyriel would like to write a note or send a message home to tell her friends where she was.

"I hope they won't have felt very uneasy on your account," he said.

"I don't think they will," she replied. "I often go back with the Roses or the Ashleys after a long run, or if the weather is bad. You are very well off for neighbours here; we have not many nice ones on our side of Hallingford—only, I think, the Martins and the Graingers. Do you know anything of them?" she added, quickly, noting a sudden glance of his eyes to hers as she mentioned the last name.

"Grainger!" cut in Miss Mason, sharply. "Oddsocks! Aye, we all know Hasson Grainger. Weel, indeed, had it been for Archer—"

"Aunt Tibby," interposed Thyrle, politely as before, but with unmistakable annoyance—not to say pain—visible on his face, "let me give you some of this fish. Will

you have a little chicken, then? You know the Roses very intimately, Miss Kyriel?"

"Yes, very."—(Miss Mason was again quenched and reduced to silence.)—"They are such nice, friendly people, you will like them for neighbours." And she wondered as she spoke if she could instigate Sir George to call; she knew his intention had been to "leave the interlopers alone." "I was with them three months one year in town," she continued—"my first season in London."

One curious phase of Miss Mason's hospitality—indeed, the only one; for she showed no pleasure and some distrust in Miss Kyriel's society—was to endeavour to make Phillis eat and drink as much or more than two strong men could have consumed in a whole day. Tea, coffee, chocolate, claret, cold beef, cold chicken, fish, ham, cold pies, curry, turkey legs, omelette, eggs, marmalade, honey, and all manner of preserves, was the course to destruction which Miss Tibby Mason did her very best to make Phillis pursue; and the latter was not a little surprised at the variety and magnificence of the entertainment, and the perfectly good style in which it was conducted—excepting only Miss Mason's urgent and plaintive appeals to "try just a morsel o' fish;" to let her "have a bit bacon done—sometimes a body can eat a bit bacon when nothing else'll go down." She implored so that her guest should eat some preserves, that Phillis at length yielded; and having demolished some apricot jam, she was embarrassed anew by the remark—

"Now, if ye'll bide a bit, ye'll be able to relish a scrap o' this short-cake; but don't hurry yourself."

"You are not accustomed to our north country breakfasts," said Thyrle, coming to the rescue. "They always have honey and these sweet things there."

"You are not north country, or even English, in your style of breakfasting," returned Phillis, smiling.

Thyrle had taken one or two glasses of Clos de Vougeot and a scrap of omelette.

"I have lived so much abroad the last few years," he answered, apologetically.

"He has no manners," remarked Miss Mason. "How can you eat when he never bites?—shafling on wi' his French wine and sec like."

Phillis found conversation with Miss Mason a somewhat arduous task, so attempted no extenuation of her host's "manners."

"You have not heard anything of poor Dickie, I suppose, Mr. Thyrle?" asked Phillis, presently.

"Yes; I sent to see if he was able to travel a little way, and he arrived here, just before you came downstairs, by a shorter cut than we took last night. I think he will be all right after a few days' care and rest."

"It is very good of you to take so much trouble. How is your horse? Did I tire him out?"

"He is as fresh as possible."

"What is his name? Did you tell me?"

"He is called John Peel."

"John Peel! What an odd name for a horse!"

"There was a famous huntsman of that name in Cumberland, and this is a Cumberland horse."

"Aye," observed Miss Mason, "whyfore did you no buy a hoose as weel as a horse i' yer ain land, i'stead o' comin' rakin' aw the way doon here? I think nowt o' yer southern places."

"But Merresford is beautiful in the summer," ventured Phillis.

"Them as knows ni better may think so," returned Miss Mason, contemptuously. "Ye've never lived i' the north, I'se war-rant."

"No," said Phillis.

Miss Mason only replied by a look and a grunt expressive of her pity for such miserable ignorance, and Phillis relapsed into silence; but when Thyrle rose, in dread of being left alone with his aunt, she exclaimed—

"Do you think I might go and see poor Dickie, Mr. Thyrle?"

"Certainly," he replied. "You shall put on my aunt's pattens and her warm Scotch shawl—you will please send for them, Aunt Tibby?"

She obeyed him, merely remarking—

"Sec manners, my sarty!"

And Thyrle wrapped the shawl, gipsy fashion, over Phillis's head, and fastened the quaint pattens on to her pretty feet.

"Now, can you run in these?" he said, laughing.

In three or four minutes they arrived, breathless and snow-feathered, in the stable. Dickie was fed and caressed by the white hands of his mistress; and then John Peel came in for an ample share of her attentions; after which the chestnut mare—a new one—had to be looked at; and then she must

see the accomplished pony, Joe, who could shake hands and smoke a pipe; and finally she inspected the whole stud, which undertaking occupied about an hour.

"Come in here, will you?" Thyrle said, stopping as they passed the conservatory door on their way back from the stables. She followed him in, and as he closed the door his watch chain caught in the handle; he did not notice, though she did, that something fell and rolled away. She stooped and picked up a locket—a very plain, solid gold locket.

"What will you give me for this pretty thing?" she said, laughing.

He turned round and saw what she held up. He put his hand hastily to his chain, and found his locket gone.

"Almost anything you like," he answered, pleasantly. "It is a thing I have had a long time, and I can't thank you too much for restoring it. The ring, I see, has grown so thin that the jerk broke it."

She gave it into his hand.

"You ask nothing for giving it back?" he said, looking as if he would rather like it if she did.

"Not now," she answered, colouring a little.

Truth to say, she had not courage to make her request.

"But you will some other time?" he persisted. "I would rather have lost anything I possess than this. Why won't you now?"

"I will some other time."

And he said no more about it. He put a few of the rarest and sweetest exotics into her hands, and then they passed on into the billiard-room, and began playing an idle game.

"How well Mr. Hasson Grainger plays billiards," observed Phillis, in a casual tone, but with a glance under her eyelashes at the quick shadow which crossed Thyrle's face when he heard the name.

"Does he?" was the laconic reply.

"I thought you knew him?" pursued Phillis, remorselessly.

"I did know a Mr. Hasson Grainger at one time. As the name is rather peculiar, he is probably the same man."

"How very odd! He used to be a great friend of mine—ours, I mean. Don't you think him very handsome?"

"I used to," in the same manner as before. "There, I have put your ball in the pocket, as a judgment on you for not attending to the game."

But she was not to be easily turned from the subject. That Mr. Thyrlé should have known Hasson Grainger, who had in a strange way influenced the last years of her life; that he should shrink from hearing his very name; and that his tone should express unconcealed dislike of him, in spite of her avowal that Grainger was a "great friend" of hers, attracted Phillis towards Archer Thyrlé in a manner she would never have owned to, though she could, perhaps, have accounted for it.

"And didn't you like Mr. Grainger very much?" she continued, after making her stroke. "He used to be such an agreeable, accomplished fellow."

Possibly she wished to pique Mr. Thyrlé into making some hasty remarks which might throw more light on the subject. But he answered coolly, though her observant eyes noticed that his lips quivered a little as he spoke—

"It is some time since I have met Mr. Grainger, and, owing to peculiar circumstances, it is quite certain that he and I shall not renew the acquaintance, should we meet again."

Phillis felt strangely awed by the quiet tone—partly sorrowful, yet with a tinge of fierce hauteur in it. While he spoke he played, steadily and well.

"You don't mean to say," said Phillis, pausing when his turn to play was over, and disregarding hers—"you don't mean to tell me that you used to be friends with Hasson Grainger, and that you have quarrelled?"

Thyrlé looked up from applying some chalk to the end of his cue, with a smile—not a pleasant one.

"You have arrived at something near enough to the truth, Miss Kyriel. Now, if you don't mind, let us dismiss Mr. Hasson Grainger."

Phillis was effectually silenced for the time; but she pondered and wondered all the more.

After luncheon, Miss Kyriel was singing some of Moore's melodies, which she had found in an old book in the drawing-room, when Thyrlé came in from an expedition to the drift in the Hallingford-road. Miss Mason was asleep by the fire.

"Don't stop your music, please," he said, as Phillis rose from the piano.

He drew a chair near her, and asked her to sing one or two of his favourite airs, which she did willingly, in a clear, ringing

voice. He took the book, and turned over the leaves until he came to "Love's young dream."

"Will you sing this?"

She complied—not, however, singing it with much expression.

He thanked her when she had finished it, and she said—

"Do you like that song? Don't you think it rather silly?"

"I think it is very sad, Miss Kyriel," was the reply.

"Sad! The air is gay. Perhaps I sing it too fast?"

"Read the first few lines."

And she read aloud—

"The days are gone when beauty bright

My heart's chain wove,

When my dream of life from morn till nigh

Was love, still love."

She looked up to him, with her lustrous eyes full of inquiry.

"When you are as old as I am," he said, smiling, "you may hear something sad, perhaps, in those words, 'The days are gone.'"

"I am old enough now," she returned, a shade rippling over the bright face. "I suppose almost every one is old enough to have sad memories—every one, at least, beyond childhood."

"I have heard somewhere—in Spain, I think," he said, "but of course I can't answer for the truth of the saying—that the life of a rich man is bright, the life of a good man brighter, but the life of a beautiful woman is brightest of all. So you ought to have no sad memories."

The tone in which he spoke was, for the first time, that of the homage to which she was accustomed; and her quick perception caught at once the unreal ring of it—that it was merely a pretty speech he might have made to any girl. It had been rather pleasant to Phillis to find a man who could talk with her by the hour without attempting any of the flattering badinage of which she was weary. She had appreciated his straightforward but always courteous manner and speech, and was quite vexed that he had descended to the commonplace complimentary language. For the moment she almost disliked him. He stood leaning against the piano, a rather amused and interested spectator of the play of feelings sometimes so easy to see on Phillis Kyriel's face. Happening to glance up, she encountered his

eyes, and she rose abruptly, and went to the window.

He did not follow her; but after about ten minutes' silence he said—

"Do you care for photographs, Miss Kyriel? I have some very good ones of all sorts of places in the library—if you care to look at them."

She acquiesced, but almost in silence; and when they were gone Miss Mason opened her eyes brightly enough.

"Settin' her cap at him a'ready, by jing!" was her comment. "Bide a bit, my lass; we're ould birds here to be caught wi' sec' like chaff—and your'e nin to my likin'. Faiks! I'll see if I cannot prevent sec as you ever comin' here to be mistress ower me."

"You seem to have been all over the world," remarked Phillis, when she had looked at pictures from America, India, Australia, New Zealand, China, and numerous countries in Europe.

"I am very fond of travelling."

"Reasonably, I can understand it. But to go such immense distances for no particular object seems to me almost waste of time."

Thyrle smiled—the hard, bitter smile which Phillis did not like—

"Perhaps Miss Kyriel will kindly point out a way in which I may more profitably employ my valuable time."

A dozen replies presented themselves to Phillis, but she only said, in a trifling tone—

"The idea of going abroad before the hunting is over is preposterous—when you possess John Peel, and the chestnut mare, too."

"I don't mean to go until next month."

"And where do you think of going?"

"Through part of Russia. I have never been farther into it than St. Petersburg."

"You must not go," Phillis exclaimed, "until after the ball at Hemsley. The Roses always give such a splendid ball at the end of the hunting season. I hope you will stay over it."

The man must have been of a most flinty composition who could have withstood so much as this from Phillis Kyriel—not to mention the tone and little glance which accompanied the words—and Thyrle was nothing of the sort.

"You are very kind; but you seem to forget that it is quite possible Sir George

Rose may not care to have me for a guest."

The quiet manliness with which Thyrle once or twice had reminded Phillis of his position in society attracted her more than she would have thought of acknowledging to herself.

"Sir George Rose, Mr. Thyrle, is sure to be glad to know you. It is absurd in you," she added, in a quicker tone, "to say such things. You are sure to be asked, and I shall be quite angry if you don't go."

"In that case, I shall make a point of attending—always under the condition that I am invited. And in what way will you reward me if I do go?"

"Reward you?" echoed Phillis, not quite seeing what he was driving at. "Such virtue must be its own reward."

"What do you say to a couple of dances? Do I ask too much? You know I may not be there, after all."

For Phillis had hesitated and blushed a little, the questions agitating her being—could this iron-miner's son dance? Would she like to be seen with him? But a glance at the light, graceful figure of the miner's son dispelled the first doubt; and her blush was for the ungenerosity of the second.

"I shall be very happy to dance with you," she answered.

"Let me settle about it, then, if you please. May I say the first waltz and the first galop?"

"You are tolerably bold, sir," thought the beauty; but there was no retreating now.

"The snow is turning to sleet," observed Mr. Thyrle, taking a look out on the bleak afternoon, "and the wind is veering round. It will thaw before night."

But before the daylight quite faded, the sleet turned to heavy rain, and in the morning the roads, though wet and dirty, were practicable.

TWO NIGHTS IN THE COUNTRY.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "HIS AT LAST."

IN TWO CHAPTERS.—I.

HAVING got a couple of days' leave at Christmas, I determined, notwithstanding the distance, to spend my short holiday in Yorkshire; and when I tell you that the nearest station to my uncle's house was twenty miles off, I am sure my readers will have already come to the conclusion

that there was a cousin in the case. And so there was—a tall, dark, handsome girl, who would be out the whole morning with her father, take a five-barred gate, ride through a bullfinch, or wait patiently for a find. I had many cousins besides Di Cholmondley, for they were a large family at Branston Hall; and at Christmas Sir John was fond of gathering as many relatives round his hospitable hearth as would face the dangers and perils of Yorkshire roads.

It was a bitterly cold afternoon when I left London, and the train was quite two hours late when I reached Milford Junction, from whence I was to ride to Branston. No true Yorkshireman would let his valuable horse stand waiting at a station on such a piercing night as this; but after a little delay, a fine strong animal, fresh from the stable, was brought up, my saddlebags were strapped on, and I mounted.

"Should any one go part o' the way, so as to gie ye a fair start, sir?" inquired the boy who had brought up my horse.

Interpreting this as equivalent to half a crown, I gave the *douceur*, and scouted the proffered aid. Had not I ridden a dozen times between this and Branston?—certainly not at Christmas, with four feet of snow on the ground, to say nothing of drifts; but still I felt confident of my organ of locality; so set off at once, with the beacon of my cousin's bright face beckoning me on.

In those days travelling on horseback was the quickest and surest mode of locomotion; there was no stoppage by drifts, felled trees, impassable ruts, or the hundred and one evils to which a carriage was subject on the so-called roads of the West Riding of Yorkshire. When I ran down for my yearly visit, I always hired a horse at South Milford, kept him during my stay at Branston, and rode him back on my return to town; that is to say, my uncle undertook that a horse should be in readiness for me, as nothing on earth would induce him to let any of his own run the risk of standing at a station. In fact, he considered trains a personal affront to the horse species, and would in no wise countenance their waiting on the vile innovator.

For the first three miles my way lay on the Great North road leading from London to York; but soon after passing Harrup Bar—well known in the days of coaching, and now to all true lovers of the hunt—I turned off into a bye-path, which, though it led

through wild and rugged country, cut short the distance by five miles at least.

The road wound up and round a hill, then out on to a long, bleak, dreary moor, covered with a counterpane of snow, and pillowed with drifts, deep, wide, and treacherous; across which white plain I had to make my way. While on the North road it had been plain sailing enough; there were drifts there, too, but they had been cut through. Here all was changed: there was no trace of any living thing having been over the smooth, white surface, save the pattering of innumerable rabbit feet.

As I came forth from the shelter of the lane, I fixed the point across the moor to which I must steer by the curl of smoke that rose from a hidden chimney. I began to cross at a respectable jog-trot, thinking it best not to waste the strength of my nag, but was soon compelled to fall back on a still more sober pace; and even this was every now and then put a stop to, as we walked gracefully, though involuntarily, into a drift, the next moment to emerge spluttering and bedizened with snow. Thus floundering and struggling, we battled over a third of the distance, and I still kept my eye steadily fixed on the smoke of the cottage. As we went on the snow got deeper and deeper, and my horse less willing to encounter fresh drifts. We had started the best of friends; on climbing the hill our terms became less affectionate; when charging through the snow I was obliged to have recourse to a little moral persuasion; and now it seemed as if we were to fall out entirely.

We had just reappeared from a drift deeper than usual, and I had anxiously looked for my curl of smoke as I gathered myself and horse up after this most severe struggle, when the beast stuck his fore feet in the snow, and utterly refused to move further. I tried talking, coaxing, and every conceivable thing I could think of, to incite him to action; but with no result. This was too tantalizing, within such a short distance of my blue wreath of smoke; for there was the cottage, standing out distinct on the horizon, much nearer than I had dared to hope.

We must have ploughed through a much wider and longer tract of snow than I had at first imagined in our final grand encounter; then, too, my uncle's house was only five miles beyond, and *she* lived there.

I looked up at the sky: the moon shone fitfully through a bank of black clouds, and as yet not a star was to be seen. Who knew how soon I might be left in utter darkness, should the whim take her to veil her face? This was more than I could stand. Raising my whip, I struck the animal sharply over the flank, at the same time pressing my spurs viciously into his sides, and the next moment we were galloping madly over all obstacles towards the thin streak of blue smoke.

As I neared the cottage, an uncomfortable feeling came over me that it was strange. There was an unfamiliarity about the place which determined me to stop and knock at the door.

I was answered by a woman's voice. Here was something new! Nothing surprises you more than to be answered by a woman when you expect to be greeted—and in this case not in the politest of tones—by the gruff voice of a man.

"Can I speak to any one?" I called out.

"Oh! ye can speak, but I doubt ony body being the better for it, with t' wind howling round t' house as it is," said a young woman, opening the door.

Seeing me she started, begged pardon, hoped I would come in and make myself at home, as it was not fit for "the likes o' me" to be out in such weather. As I had no idea of not reading my fate in my cousin's bright eyes that night, I thanked her, refused, and inquired—

"If I was right for Branston Hall?"

"Branston Hall! I was nigh upon twenty mile out of t' way."

"Where the deuce am I, then?" exclaimed I.

"On the road to South Milford."

It is very hard to be vexed with yourself, especially when your own stupidity has prevented your accomplishing your wished-for desires. I could not put it on my horse, for he had shown his sense by refusing to stir a step in the wrong direction. Of course, I saw it all now. How I had been plunging down instead of cutting through the drift, and then galloping off in the wrong direction. But the cottage? Well, that only proved there were more smoky chimneys than one in the world. What an idiot I had been! I felt extremely miserable, sitting out there in the cold. It was impossible to go on in the dark, through unknown country, to Bran-

ston; equally so to return to South Milford. The only thing to be done was to accept the woman's hospitality.

Following her into a yard, I stabled my horse for the night. These Yorkshire people always seem to have yards, or at any rate a stable, they can stow away a horse in, which suggests unpleasantly to the benighted traveller that at one time cattle-lifting and its accompanying evils were not uncommon in this part of her Majesty's dominions. Then I returned with my saddle-bags into the house, and was duly hailed by a lusty yelling from an old-fashioned white painted cradle, on low rockers, placed on the floor.

"Haud ye' noise," cried my Thais, as she seized hold of the cradle, and began rocking it violently. "Grandfather is no good any longer with childer, since he had his last stroke o' rheumatics. He used to be a rare 'un at nursing bairns; but he can't rock or do nought but wag his tongue now. Can ye, granny?" screamed his daughter-in-law, with a shrillness of tone that effectually woke the old man out of his sleep; who, on seeing me, commenced pulling an imaginary forelock, and asseverating that "he was not deaf, only a little hard of hearing."

After such an introduction, I thought it incumbent on me to cultivate the aged one's acquaintance; so, drawing my chair to his side, I began a conversation which turned out highly entertaining to him, but totally unintelligible to me, as he had a habit of answering his own questions according to his own lights when not catching the purport of my answers. Luckily, a diversion was soon created in my favour by a prolonged howl from the antique cradle, and my hostess, stopping in her occupation of laying the cloth, came up to me and made the following speech—

"Sir, I beg pardon for taking the liberty, but I reckon you are well'y nigh clammed; and I am in this perdickelement—I can't both get t' supper and rock t' child; so if you want summat to eat, you must rock t' cradle till I am ready to gie him a turn."

Having made out the drift of her argument, I set to vigorously rocking the cradle, and if that child turns out sane I am not answerable for it. I found the harder I rocked the quieter it got, so I went on with a vengeance, swinging it backwards and forwards in a marvellous manner. As I stooped over the cradle, taking care to keep the hood between me and the he, she, or it

inside, I noticed three or four smooth round holes pierced completely through the wood, looking exactly as if at one time it had served as a butt for pistol practice. So puzzled was I as to how they could have come there, that at last I drew the attention of my hostess to the phenomenon.

"Aye," said she, "those are Boggart holes."

"Boggart holes! Boggart holes!" exclaimed I, à la George III.; "what do you mean by Boggart holes?"

"Law bless the gentleman! and hast ye never heard tell ou t' Boggarts?"

"No."

"Nor t' Guytrash?"

"No, nor any other trash."

"Ye shouldna say that, sir. For it is a sore thing to be hard o' belief," said she, in a subdued voice, mysteriously.

Said I, beginning to perceive I had unwittingly fallen into a nest of superstition—

"I am willing to believe anything I am told on good authority."

"Well, my uncle on my mother's side met t' Guytrash himself."

"And what did he say?"

"He didn't say nothing, but he looked awful. I have heard uncle tell how he felt as if he was standing in a bucket of hard ice as Boggart laid hold on him from behind. He was that scared he fell down on his knees, and he prayed Boggart once, and he wouldn't let him go; and he prayed him twice, and he wouldn't let him go; and he prayed him thrice, and he did let him go; and uncle was an altered man from that day. He never went agin to t' public afore coming home with his wages as long as he lived."

"But I want to know what this Boggart trash, or whatever you call him, was like?"

"Uncle used to say as those who had seen t' Padfute didn't ought to talk of his looks, and those who hadn't didn't fall to know; but if you want to hear more," added she, seeing my disappointed face, "granny there has seen t' Guytrash himself. Tell t' strange gentleman how you saw t' Padfute at Harrup Bar," screamed she into his ear.

"Aye, aye," answered he, shaking his head, while his eyes lit up with strange gleams of past memories.

I was now all on the qui vive for a true Yorkshire ghost story; so I worked away harder than ever at the cradle, to keep the

anathematized infant quite quiet, in order not to lose one word of the forthcoming tale.

"T' GUYTRASH O' T' HARRUP BAR.

"There are some as believe in Boggarts and some as don't. I make no remark as to what I believe, I only say what I saw; and if it was on my dying deathbed, I would say the same, as how I seed t' Padfute with my own two eyes at Harrup Bar, forty years ago next Christmas. Let 'em gainsay it who may.

"It wor a cold December night, and I was sitting quite quiet like a side o' t' fire, with a little bit of baccy, when in comes my old woman, in siccan a like on a flurry as I knowed summat must have happened.

"Well, old woman, and what's t' job now?" says I.

"Job as I reckon you'll be none so keen to go after. Here's t' babby come, and no cradle to put it in!"

"By jengy! that's a go," says I, as t' baccy pipe dropped on t' floor, all along o' me being took in such a hurry like.

"Are you going to get on your hat, instead of gawping there by t' side o' fire like any other fool on a man, when your own flesh and blood may be dying upstairs all along of you keeping me a-jawking downstairs?"

"Aye, well, lass, I'll be off in a minute, and you'll see t' doctor afore you think."

"Doctor, indeed! Do you think, at such a time, I'll be plagued with any o' siccan-like rubbish i' t' house? Haven't I been ower twenty year in t' trade, and never had a death brought home to me yet, which I mean to have printed on my grave, under a lady weeping on an urn, with a cherub infant astride o' t' top."

"Dinna tak' on so. I ne'er meant to hurt your feelings; but who am I to fetch?"

"Why, t' cradle of course, man. Just you trot over to mother's, at Upton, and ask her to lend us t' white cradle, or, if it's out, m'appen some o' t' neighbours would let us have one for a bit."

"So out I went. It was siccan a dark night, a man could not see his noyse if he wanted, and I had better nor five mile to walk.

"Well, I got to mother's, at Upton, reet enough, and there I stayed for a bit o' stuff. Then one or two neighbours dropped in to hear how granddaughter was going on, and some said it warn't neighbourly to go till I

had looked in and taken a drop o' summat with them; and they were all so friendly-like, and glad to see me, that it were nigh on twelve afore I war fairly out o' t' village and striding home.

"I hadn't been agate o' walking many minutes afore t'rain came down; so I clapped t' craddle on my head, and it warn't a bad umbrelly neither. T' way lay along t' road t' night mail from London to York ran, and it war that dark I began to feel very lonesome, and wish I had some one with me; so I said to myself, 'My lad, you must not get soft-like, as if you had had too much to drink, for they say t' Boggarts never harm those who are sober.' So, conversing with myself for company's sake, I strode on.

"I had gotten nigh Harrup Bar, when I heerd a kind o' noise that made my blood freeze up; t' craddle began to shake so, I thought it would have fallen over and me on t' top of it; but I managed to crawl into t' ditch with craddle still on t' top of my head. T' noise came on nearer and nearer, like the rumbling of an army of chariots, and I could hear the roaring of his voice. Then I knew it was t' Guytrash coming.

"I can never quite remember how t' next part came; but I saw he'd eight great flaming yellow eyes, and two great big red ones, as large as t' bell i' t' church tower. Then he spoke to me in a voice like siccan a many trumpets. I thought t' judgment day was come, and 'cause I would not answer, he yarked out t' thunderbolt, let fly at my head, knocked off t' craddle, and disappeared in a flash of lightning. I thought I was dead at first, and then set off running, and niver stopped till I got safe home, when I told my wife how I had seen t' Guytrash or t' devil, I didn't know which.

"Next morning t' men i' t' village walked with me to Harrup Bar; and there, just as I said, we found t' craddle i' t' ditch, with four holes in it which t' Boggart had made; and when anybody comes a-twitting me of Boggarts, I point to t' craddle, and says, 'If you can say who made them holes, I'll say no more of Boggarts;' and I've never found a man yet whom that question did not cap."

The space in the cottage being limited, I wrapped my rug round my legs, drew my hat over my eyes, and contented myself with spending the night before a glorious coal fire.

ANGUISH IN PRINT.

IN THE STRICTEST CONFIDENCE.

TEAR THE FOURTH.

IN FELICITY.

THE next day was wet and miserable; and waiting about, and feeling strange and uncomfortable, as I did, made matters ever so much worse. We were all in the school-room; and first one and then another stiff-backed, new-smelling book was pushed before me, and the odour of them made me feel quite wretched, it was so different to what of late I had been accustomed. For don't, pray, think I dislike the smell of a new book—oh, no, not at all, I delight in it; but then it must be from Mudie's, or Smith's, or the St. James's-square place, while as for these new books—one was that nasty, stupid old Miss Mangnall's "Questions," and another was Fenwick de Porquet's this, and another Fenwick de Porquet's that, and, soon after, Noehden's German Grammar, thrust before me with a grin by the Fraulein; while at last, as if to drive me quite mad, as a very culmination of my miseries, I was set, with Clara Fitzacre and five more girls, to write an essay on "The tendencies towards folly of the present age."

"What shall I say about it, ma'am?" I said to Miss Furness, who gave me the paper.

"Say?" she exclaimed, as if quite astonished at such a question. "Why, give your own opinions upon the subject."

"Oh, shouldn't I like to write an essay, and give my own opinions upon you," I said to myself; while there I sat with the sheets of paper before me, biting and indenting the penholder, without the slightest idea how to begin. I did think once of dividing the subject into three parts or heads, like Mr. St. Purre did his sermons; but there, nearly everybody I have heard in public does that, so it must be right. So I was almost determined to begin with a firstly, and then go on to a secondly, and then a thirdly; and when I felt quite determined, I wrote down the title, and under it "firstly." Then I allowed the whole of the first page for that head, put "secondly" at the beginning of the second page, and "thirdly" upon the next, which I meant to be the longest. Then I turned back, and wondered what I had better say next, and whether either of the girls would do it for me if I offered her a shilling.

"What shall I say next?" I asked myself, and then corrected my question; for it ought to have been, "What shall I say first?" And then I exclaimed, under my breath, "A nasty, stupid, spiteful old thing, to set me this to do, on purpose to annoy me!" when, as I looked on one side, I found the girl next me was nearly at the bottom of her sheet of paper. And then I looked on the other side, where sat Miss Patty Smith, glaring horribly down at her blank paper, nibbling the end of her pen, and smelling dreadfully of peppermint; while her forehead was all wrinkled up, as if the big atlas were upon her head, and squeezing down the skin.

Just then I caught Clara's eye—for she was busy making a great deal of fuss with her blotting paper, as if she had quite ended her task—when, upon seeing my miserable, hopeless look, she came round and sat down by me.

"Never mind the essay," said Clara; "say you had the headache. I dare say it will be the truth, won't it? For it always used to give me the headache when I first came."

"Oh, yes," I said, with truth, "my head aches horribly."

"Of course it does, dear," said Clara; "so leave that rubbish. It will be dancing in about five minutes."

"I say," drawled Miss Smith to Clara, "what's tendencies towards folly? I'm sure I don't know."

"Patty Smith's," said Clara, in a sharp voice; while the great stupid thing sat there, glaring at her with her big, round eyes, as much as to say, "What do you mean?"

Sure enough, five minutes had not elapsed before we were summoned to our places in the room devoted to dancing and calisthenic exercises; and, as a matter of course, I was all in a flutter to see the French dancing master, who would be, I felt sure, a noble-looking refugee—a count in disguise—and I felt quite ready to let him make a favourable impression; for one cannot help sympathizing with political exiles, since one has had a Louis Napoleon here in difficulties. But there, I declare it was too bad; and I looked across at Clara, who had slipped on first, and was holding her handkerchief to her mouth to keep from laughing as she watched my astonished looks; for you never did see such a droll little man, and I felt

ready to cry with vexation at the whole place.

There he stood—Monsieur de Kittville—the thinnest, funniest little man I ever saw off the stage. He seemed to have been made on purpose to take up as little room as possible in the world, and he looked that tight and squeezey, one could not feel cross long in his presence; while, if I had not been in such terribly low spirits, I'm sure I must have laughed aloud at the funny, capering little fellow, as he skipped about, now here and now there—going through all the figures, and stopping every now and then to scrape through the tune upon his little fiddle. But there, it would have been a shame to laugh, for he was so good and patient; and I know he could feel how some of the girls made fun of him, though he bore it all so amiably and never said a word.

I know he must have thought me terribly stupid, for there was not one girl so awkward, and grumpy, and clumsy over the lesson. But then, although it was done kindly enough, what did I want with being pushed here, and poked there, and shouted at and called after in bad English, when I had been used to float round and round brilliantly lighted rooms, in the *deux temps* or polka, till day-break? And I declare the very thoughts of such scenes at a time like this were quite maddening. Finished! I felt as if I should be regularly finished long before the year had expired; and, after the short season of gaiety I had enjoyed in London, I would far rather have gone back to Guisnes and spent my days with dear old *Sœur Charité* in the convent. But there, after all, I fancy papa was right when he said it was only a quiet advertising dodge—he will say such vulgar things, that he picks up in the City—and that it was not a genuine convent at all; I mean one of those places we used to read about, where they built the sisters up in walls, and all that sort of thing. But these things do grow so dreadfully matter-of-fact, and so I found it; for here was I feeling, not so dreadfully young, but so horribly old, to be back at school.

The place seemed so stupid: the lessons seemed stupid; girls, teachers, everything seemed stupid. There were regular times for this, and regular times for that, and one could not do a single thing as one liked. If I went upstairs to do my hair, and sat down before the glass, there would be a horrible,

cracked voice crying, "Miss Bozerne, young ladies are not allowed in the dormitories out of hours;" and then I had to go down. Oh, it was dreadful, having one's time turned into a yard measure, and doled out to one in quarter inches for this and half inches for that, and not have a single scrap to do just what one liked with. Perhaps I could have borne it the better if I had not been doing just as I liked at home. For mamma very seldom interfered; and I'm sure I was as good as could be always, till they nearly drove me out of my mind with this horrible school.

For it was a school, and nothing else but a school; and as they all ill-used me, and trod upon me like a worm in the path, why, of course I turned and annoyed them all I could at the Cedars, and persisted in calling it school. Finishing establishment—pah! Young ladies, indeed—fah! Why, didn't I get to know about Miss Hicks being the grocer's daughter, and being paid for in sugar? And wasn't Patty Smith the butcher's girl? Why, she really smelt of meat, and her hair always looked like that of those horrible butcher boys in London, who never wear caps, but make their heads so shiny and matty with fat. Patty was just like them; and I declare the nasty thing might have eaten pomatum, she used such a quantity. Why, she used to leave the marks of her head right through her nightcap on to the pillow; and I once had the nasty thing put on my bed by mistake, when if it didn't smell like the crust of Mrs. Blunt's apple dumplings, and set me against them more than ever.

Dear, sensitive reader, did you ever eat finishing establishment "poudings aux pommes," as Mrs. Blunt used to call them?—that is to say, school apple dumplings, or as we used to call them, "pasty wasters." If you never did, never do; for they are horrible. Ours used to be nasty, wet, slimy, splashy things, that used to slip about in the great blue dish. And one did slide right off one day on to the cloth, when the servant was putting it on the table; and then the horrible thing collapsed in a most disgusting way, and had to be scraped up with a spoon. Ugh! such a mess! I declare I felt as if I was one of a herd of little pigs, about to be fed; and I told Clara so, when she burst out laughing, and Miss Furness ordered her to leave the table. If they would only have boiled the dreadful dump-

lings in basins, it would not have mattered so much; but I could see plainly enough that they were only tied up loosely in cloths, so that the water came in to make them wet and pappy; while they were always made in a hurry, and the crust would be in one place half an inch and in another three inches thick; and I always had the thick mass upon my plate. Then, too, they used to be made of nasty, viciously acid apples, with horrible cores that never used to be half cut out, and would get upon your palate and then would not come off again. Oh, dear! would I not rather have been a hermit on bread and water and sweet herbs than have lived upon Mrs. Blunt's greasy mutton—always half done—and pasty wasters!

The living was quite enough to upset you, without anything else, and it used to make me quite angry, for one always knew what was for dinner, and it was always the same every week. It would have been very good if it had been nicely cooked, no doubt, but then it was not; and I believe by having things nasty there used to be quite a saving in the expenditure. "Unlimited," Mrs. Blunt told mamma the supplies were for the young ladies; but only let one of the juniors do what poor little Oliver Twist did—ask for more—and just see what a look the resident teacher at the head of the table would give her. It was a great chance if she would ask again. But there, I must tell you about our living. Coffee for breakfast that always tasted like Patty Smith's Spanish liquorice wine that she used to keep in a bottle in her pocket—a nasty toad! Thick bread and butter—all crumbly and dab, as if the servant would not take the trouble to spread the butter properly. For tea there was what papa used to tease mamma by calling "a mild infusion," though there was no comparison between our tea and Allsham tea, for mamma always bought hers at Twinings', and Allsham tea was from Miss Hicks's father's; and when we turned up our noses at it, and found fault, she said it was her pa's strong family congou, only there was so little put in the pot; while if they used not to sweeten the horrible pinky-looking stuff with a treacle-brown sugar; and as for the milk—we do hear of cows kicking over the milking pail, and I'm sure if the bluey-looking stuff poured into our tea had been shown to any decent cow, and she had been told that it was milk, she would have kicked it over in an instant.

TABLE TALK.

MUCH is said about British pluck. Here is a case of genuine pluck and noble chivalry combined, at the landing of the 42nd Highlanders. The scene was described, we believe, by the pen which depicted the pleasures of a night in a workhouse. "There was one strapping soldier who carried his arm in a white sling, and was presently hailed from the quay by a woman who carried a child in her arms. It was a hail in which was commiseration as well as recognition and welcome; and to see how that fine fellow whipped the crippled arm out of its rest and waved it towards her, that she might see at once that there was nothing to cry about, was as good as a golden gift, especially when the man's features, closely scrutinized, betrayed the sharp twinge of pain which the generous act caused him." If that had been Bayard, how history would have blared through the trumpet of Fame, borrowed for the nonce. As it is, we can only say—And this is the stuff of which our privates are composed!

POLISH POLAND was celebrated, in the last generation or so, for the number of exiles it made whilst performing the well-known rôle of the British Lion and Unicorn—to wit, fighting for the Crown. Has it ever occurred to anybody who peruses our daily journals that history is now to some extent repeating itself? Day after day we see Poland—in this case, British Poland—making exiles while fighting for the Crown. However, Mr. Poland, the Crown solicitor, has a very different class of individual to deal with. In the one case, the exiles were noble; in the other, ignoble to a degree, and blessings to their country wait upon their absence.

ONE OF THE tramway companies has been much exercised to find a means by which a check could be kept upon dishonest conductors. Time back, the conductor took the passenger's money; then followed a régime when collectors boarded each car, just as Custom House officers do a vessel in the Thames, obtained the fares, and departed to board some other car. This not proving effective, another rule of the conductor ensued, after the fashion pursued with the ancient 'bus. But now the proceedings are quite startling. You take your

seat, and before long the conductor cometh, glares at you and demands your fare, at the same time presenting what looks like a silver-mounted revolver—barrel, chambers, all seem to be there; but it only turns out to be an Alarm Punch, with which the presenter nips out the sum paid, threepence or twopence, from an ordinary railway sort of ticket; at the same time, a little gong inside the instrument sounds, and the passenger is free, while the conductor bears off in his weapon the little voucher nipped out, to show to his employers. Once upon a time, a clever inventor contrived a steam engine by means of which corks were drawn—— But these comparisons are odious.

IT IS IMPOSSIBLE at times to help that intense feeling of British pride surging up and overwhelming us as we see most frequently how we have advanced since the days when our forefathers wore woad. What a vast stride, for instance, there is between us and the Ashantees we have just conquered! Here is a proof of our civilization at Consett:—"Between ten and eleven o'clock two men attacked a navvy with life preservers, and maltreated him in such a manner that his life is despaired of. The police were attacked with stones while taking a prisoner to the lock-up, and several windows were smashed. This morning upwards of twenty colliers attacked a poor tramp, named James Tonnely, on the highway at Annfieldplain, near this place. After kicking him about the head, they threw the unfortunate man into a well ten feet deep." Happy land!

ENOUGH IS AS good as a feast. Surely, then, in spite of the sparkling music and clever acting at two theatres, it is time we received cards all round bearing the words, "Madame Angot, P.P.C."

All Contributions are attentively considered, and unaccepted MSS. are returned on receipt of stamps for postage; but the Editor cannot hold himself responsible for any accidental loss. No unaccepted MSS. will be returned until a written application has been made for them.

Communications to the Editor should be addressed to the Office, 19, Tavistock-street, Covent-garden, W.C.

Terms of Subscription to ONCE A WEEK, free by post:—Weekly Numbers for Six Months, 5s. 5d.; Monthly Parts, 5s. 8d.

ONCE A WEEK

NEW SERIES.

No. 328.

April 11, 1874.

Price 2d.

JACK'S SISTER; OR, WOMANLY PAST QUESTION.

CHAPTER XXIII.

WHAT MERLE SAID IN THE CLOISTERS.



MERLE'S manner somehow served as a quencher on further conversation. Enid, glancing at him, saw that he was very pale, and that he avoided looking at her. Instinctively she felt that something more important than college scrapes or money matters remained yet to

be discussed, and her heart felt troubled, without knowing why. The idea that Merle might have followed Jack's example, and fallen in love with some one, did not occur to her mind, fancy free of such imaginings; and she simply waited in silence until he should choose to speak to her.

The weather was exquisitely fine—one of those rare days in November when the air is clear and soft as in the first weeks of autumn, the sky palely blue and cloudless, the sun shining through a faint golden haze. Down at the river-side, indeed, the air had been cool, and the ground so damp that they walked briskly while talking; but up here in the cloisters—whose grey walls always seemed to catch every wandering sun-beam, and cast it back upon the quiet graves and daisy-sprinkled sod—the temperature felt so mild, not to say warm, that Enid loosened a button of her fur jacket, and re-

marked that it was like a second little Indian summer—

"And just fancy our being only five weeks from Christmas, Merle!"

Merle made no reply. He was making up his mind to a step which had only been suggested by Aunt Jane's words half an hour ago; but which, once received and accepted, seemed only the natural climax of his life, the end to which his feet had been tending ever since childhood.

"Enid married to some one in her own state of life!"

That was the text his mind ran on. And oh! Aunt Jane, if you could but have known what a volcano you were rousing when those few words slipped from your lips, temper would never have got the better of you as it did.

It may appear incredible, but, until the idea was thus rudely put before his eyes, the possibility of Enid ever belonging to any one else—ever giving any man, in or out of her own state of life, the right to limit her kindness and affection for himself—had utterly failed to cross his mind even in its wildest imaginings. The shock of fierce anger and revulsion which passed over mind and body, shaking both to the very core, at the sound of Miss Leyburn's words, were sufficient enlightenment—if he needed any—of what Enid was to himself, and what he should feel at losing her.

But, indeed, he needed none. She was everything to him—always had been—always must be. To tear her out of his life would be like tearing the life itself away. To marry her to some one else—some one else, when she was his by the inalienable right of first possession!—why, the idea was simple blasphemy against human nature, and not to be borne a single moment.

Somehow, till to-day, Merle had never even contemplated a temporary separation from Enid after he left college, save when the exigencies of literary work should sum-

mon him to London for a day or two. A curacy at Marshton Fallows, a residence in the old home until such time as a snug living or Jack's marriage should oblige him to settle down in a house of his own—with Enid, of course: *that* needed not mentioning—such had been the picture which his mind had unconsciously painted of the future; till Aunt Jane's hand gave the first shock to his basket of eggs, and set the whole concern quivering.

His first feeling was almost that he had lost Enid. His next that, threaten who might, nothing should tear her from him. Why, she had never looked so beautiful in her life as when he saw her waiting at the door for him. Indeed, he had never thought of her being beautiful at all; and now he grudged every eye which fell on her face, every tone of her voice which reached other ears than his. He forgot the evanescent flirtations of his college days. He forgot Minnie, his past remorse, his uncertain future, everything and anything but the tide of passion which swept over him, making his heart beat so quickly that it almost choked him, and the blood tingle in the tips of his fingers at the touch of her sleeve or the sound of her voice.

Lose her! Give her up! Not while he had life and power. She was his—his own precious jewel—the flower and crown of his life; and let who might try to snatch her from him, this afternoon should decide whether she would not rather cling more closely to him, as he to her, from that day, henceforward and for ever.

Trembling in the grasp of his own strong passion—a passion which he called love, knowing (poor boy!) no higher sort, but which was of that order that it would almost rather have killed its object than let it go—Merle strode on, marching at random through the grass, and unconscious for a moment that Enid had slipped away to her mother's grave, and was busy tying up some loose trails of ivy which had fallen from the marble cross, and straggled over the mound below. She called to him from thence, and it was almost pitiful to mark the effort with which he strove to clear the haggard anxiety from his brow, and answer her bright look and tone.

"See, Merle, how lovely the blue sky looks through those yellow leaves from here. I am glad we came to-day, it is so warm and quiet; and look how the sunlight

falls on our grave. You know what the Black Forest peasants call a sunbeam? 'The smile of God.' I like the name. Don't you? And there always seems a smile for mother, even when the snow is thick above, and all the rest of the world looks grey and gloomy."

Merle came and stood behind her, but he could not speak. About their feet the dry, yellowing grass rustled softly. One or two late, pink-lipped daisies peeped shyly forth, as if in doubt whether it were spring-time again or not; and the graves slept on in the quiet sunshine, casting long, wavering shadows of cross and headstone on the lichen-covered walls, and crumbling, shadowy cloisters. Above, the blue sky lifted its stainless arch over the towers and turrets of the old minster; and the sheltering trees murmured and shook down fresh handfuls of golden leaves at every breath of wind, to add to the carpet of brown and red already forming above the narrow paths; and which, stripped from above, gave peeps every here and there between the fast baring branches, of distant gables, red, high-pitched roof, and twisted chimneys; while through the stained west window of the minster came a rich, low tremble on the air, a muttered rush of chords gravely grand, and more as though the wind, not human fingers, was touching that quaint old organ within.

So peacefully solemn, so sweetly still the scene, it might have calmed a mood even wilder than Merle's had he given himself leave to take it in. As it was, he only felt it so far that it tied his tongue, and drove the blood back on his heart when he would have spoken.

Enid twisted herself round from her seat on an ancient tombstone, and looked up at him inquiringly.

"Something is the matter, Merle," she said, in tones whose gentleness was just tinged with anxiety. "You brought me here to tell it. Tell me now," and she put out her hand affectionately. "You don't know how ill you look. And yet it cannot be very much. Is it?" with a second upward look of inquiry.

Merle did not take her offered hand, though he made a movement to do so. It required all the force in his nature to restrain his voice within anything like quietness, even without the touch of her hand to shake him.

"Only this much," he said, speaking

slowly and hoarsely—"that I have been thinking, Enid, how I could bear to lose you. I do not think I could bear it—and live."

Her great grey eyes opened wide with innocent wonder.

"But, Merle, I don't understand. Why should you lose me?" with a little laugh. "I am not going to die, and nothing but death could make you lose me."

"Would you vow that—swear it to me, Enid—that—what you said just now—nothing but death shall part us two?"

Her countenance changed. Watching it in devouring anxiety, Merle saw a faint shade of displeasure cross the sweet expression of eyes and mouth.

"My dear Merle, I don't think vows are necessary for such a simple matter as this."

"You are vexed, Enid. Forgive me. I am not myself. But I have been so bitterly tried to-day."

"I don't think you are well," she said, looking up at him with kindly anxiety. "All this trouble and worry has told on you, and made your head bad again. Do not think of such unpleasant impossibilities as losing me, or anything of that sort; but at the pleasant probability that you will take your degree in the spring, and come back to us to settle down for good."

"Enid, that is the impossibility. I had hoped for it too—clung to it, God knows, as the dream of my life; but to-day, your—" he stopped: a right and gentlemanly feeling forbade him to enlist Enid against the aunt she loved—"to-day it has been pointed out to me that this may not be. When, through your father's generous aid, I take my degree, it is that I may go away, out of the old house and old places, make a home of my own instead of hanging on to other people, fix myself where chance may put me, and live there without—Enid, I could live without anything but you. I *can't* live without you."

Even yet—with the waning yellow sunlight on his wrung, white face, and hands knotted and twisted round the old monument on which he leant—Enid did not thoroughly understand. All that she took in was that he was to go, part his life from hers and theirs, round whose home it had twined so many years, leave them to enjoy every comfort and luxury, and make what poor home he could for himself, far away.

The idea was too much for Enid's tender

heart. Her eyes lightened with sudden indignation, and then there rushed across her the thought, "Some one has said this—who had the right but my father?" and indignation went out in simple sorrow.

"Merle, are you sure—quite sure—that you are to live away from us? It seems so unnatural! And yet—"

"And yet? Go on, Enid. You could bear it?"

"Yes, if it were for your good. I was thinking, perhaps it may be. You are so clever, and you do not care for the people or clergy here. Perhaps London is your proper sphere, and there you would rise higher than you could at home. We should miss you at first terribly. I can't bear to think of it. But you would write to us very often, and come down to see us whenever you could? Merle, dear, it will be hard—at least, it will seem hard at first; but I can bear it—we can both bear it—if it is necessary and good."

"It is not good!" he burst out, the calm, grave tones of her voice only adding fresh fuel to his excitement. "Enid, I shall never get on, never rise to anything, without you and your love to help and bless my efforts."

"Should I love you less because you are doing your duty away from home, and needing our love more?" she asked, reproachfully.

"Yes, in time. Oh! Enid, you are so innocent! Don't you understand that things can't go on for ever as they have done hitherto? People are already beginning—curse their gossiping tongues!—to remember that we are not children, but man and woman; and that I am only a cousin, nothing more. This very day I was told, with all a spiteful woman's brutality, that it was not well for you to give your love and sympathy as freely as you do to me—me who am not your brother, and have no right to any especial care from you, unless you give it me—unless, Enid—"

"Merle, please don't go on. I understand now. I don't want to hear any more."

Her tone was so full of pain that he stopped instinctively, and could have knelt down and begged her pardon in utter shame for having been the first to lay a rough hand on that white veil of innocence which had never known touch or ruffle before. For a moment the blood rushed to his face as hotly as to hers; but he hardly compre-

hended the woman he had awakened; for it was but a second before she lifted her eyes, frank and steady as ever, to his—so downcast and abashed—and spoke:

"I am sorry, very sorry, that any one should have spoken so to you; but you were quite right—quite right, and thoughtful, and kind—to tell me. Forgive my stopping you so sharply, dear. It was ungrateful of me, when you were only explaining why you must go. Shall we go home now?"

Home! Yes, *that* was what he had done, confirmed her sense of the justice of his exile, and made her hurry to leave him! He saw it all, in the changed tone of her voice, the decision of her movement; and, springing forward, laid his hands on hers with a quick, passionate gesture—

"Enid!—Enid! forgive me! I could not help telling you. It cut me to the heart to do it. For I love you—I love you more than the whole world put together! Enid, my own darling cousin, promise me that, if I go, you will never cease to love me—that when I can ask you, you will come to me again, to be my very own—my wife!"

"Your— Oh! Merle—no, no! Please let me go. I can't—"

She was startled—shocked—shrinking from his grasp, and hardly knowing what she said in the fright and agitation of an idea so new and so unthought of.

Merle, watching her face, thought that it was himself from whom she turned so shudderingly; and, dropping her hands without a word of persuasion, folded his arms upon the marble cross above Mrs. Leyburn's grave, and bowed his face upon them, his whole frame trembling with the sharp agony of disappointment.

Contrite and sorrowful at the pain she had caused, Enid came to his side, begging his pardon, and promising not only to love him as before, but to make plain to everybody that he had all, and more than, a brother's right to her affection—the right of her mother's last charge and commandment. He put her away, answering almost scornfully, in his great trouble—

Would her people allow her to be compelled to make excuses for her conduct? Would a husband permit it, or be content with the half of wifely love and duty? He would not—no, nor any other man.

"Then I will not marry any man—I will never marry at all," Enid cried, with a flash

of girlish petulance, "if marriage is to prevent my loving you, and my own people. There, Merle, you have my [promise on it."

"As if I would take it! Enid, you talk like a child. Either marry me—keep that promise you made to your dying mother, and stay with me for ever—or tell me to go now—to the devil, if you will, for I shall go there without you—there and nowhere else! Why, I swear to you, by the Heaven above us, that without you, and the hope of having you for my own some day, I should have gone utterly to the bad long ago. I am not a good man. I am not worthy of you; and I have no right to ask this sacrifice from you. But if you loved me—if you only loved me— There, it's no use talking—you merely despise me for it. You—"

"Merle—" she interrupted, tremblingly.

"Hush, for God's sake! I don't want to hear fresh offers of sisterly affection. Do you think I don't know what mere words they are? Could we ever be to each other again what we have been till to-day? You know we could not. No, Enid—go home by yourself, and be happy. You have chosen wisely and prudently—done your duty—been my light, my saint, my all, while safety and prudence permitted; thrown me away when safety and prudence dictated! There, go. I don't blame you, even though you have broken your vow and my heart in one word; but God and your mother forgive me if I go to destruction without you—you in whose hands I had laid my life, and who have cast it away!"

Merle was not looking at her. His face was hidden in his clasped hands; and tears, hot tears of bitter anguish and mortification, were falling through the close-twined fingers.

Enid stood for a moment beside him, silent, shocked and grieved to the soul. She hardly knew what to do or say, while shaken and tortured by this sudden revelation of the strength of this man's feelings towards her, shrinking alike from the new tie and the new rupture, helpless and dismayed for the first time in her life, under a trial for which nothing in that life had ever prepared her. Then she looked at him; and the first sight of his misery—the sight of tears, so easy and natural to a woman, so awful and unwonted in a man—drove every thought away except that he was suffering, and she was the cause—she who had indeed pro-

mised to stand by him, and make him her first care to the end of her life.

"Merle," she said, touching his arm very timidly, and not even daring to look at him in his weakness—a weakness which seemed the more terrible to her in that she had never witnessed it in any man before, save in the one supreme sorrow of her mother's death—

"Merle, please forgive me. I don't think I understood. I didn't know it was so much to you, or I would not have said no. Of course I will be your wife, dear, if you want me, and if father will let me. What greater wish can I have than to make you happy?"

Her voice trembled a little still; but it was so soft and soothing—more as though she were giving way to some wilful child who would not be pacified otherwise, than signing her own fate for good or ill—that Merle could hardly believe it. Gazing at her with almost haggard anxiety, he caught her hands in his, and begged her not to jest over what was life and death to him. Did she know what she was saying?

"Yes, I think so," she answered, speaking with rather troubled earnestness, but leaving her two hands in his. "If you really want me so badly, if you cannot do without me—though I think and hope you are stronger than you believe—I am quite willing to do what you ask. I do not know why I refused, except that I had never dreamt of such a thing before. It seemed unnatural, somehow. You were like Jack to me, you know, and I had never thought of mother wishing anything else. I dare say she did, though, since you think it; and if so, it is certainly right to keep my promise, and stay with you."

She was looking at the grave, not him; and her voice had a dreamy tone, as though she were arguing out the matter with her guardian angel.

Surely, never was love quite so answered before. Surely, if Merle had pressed her ungenerously, his reward was not wholly sweet.

"Will it not make you happy, Enid?" he asked, with painful wistfulness. "You speak as if—as if it were no concern of yours, but only my good you were thinking of. Oh, my darling, I am selfish in wanting you—I know it. I know you could do so much better. But I love you—I love you better than many a better man; and I will try so hard to make you happy."

"I know you will," she said, gently. "I know you love me, and I don't think you are selfish. Only be cheerful now, and do not talk as if—as if—"

"As if what, dearest?" he asked, seeing her lip tremble.

"As if you were not good. I never heard you talk in that desperate way before. I can't bear it!"

And here the overwrought feelings broke suddenly down; and Enid, so calm and self-composed usually, burst into tears.

"I could not help it," she said, checking them at his first word of penitent alarm—"you frightened me so. But indeed I am quite happy—quite glad."

"I will never frighten you again," Merle cried, with remorseful fervour—"never grieve or fret you, my love—my own! Oh! Enid, you have given me life and salvation to-day! God bless you for it!"

He took her in his arms as he spoke, and kissed her passionately. She shrank a little away, then reproached herself for doing so; and, flushing under the fear of having given pain, touched his wrist tenderly with her slender fingers, and again suggested that they should go home.

Merle obeyed. They were both too much agitated for further speech. The sunlight had faded from Mrs. Leyburn's grave. The organ ceased. Enid was shivering all over; and Merle, in the great gladness of his new-won treasure, feared that she had taken cold. Very silently they left the cloisters; and it was not until they had crossed the quiet road and were close to the Cedars that Merle said, half hesitatingly—

"It may be two or three years, perhaps more, before I can hope to claim you, Enid. I am a very poor man, remember."

"You will be working for me, and I waiting for you," she answered, gently. "It will not seem long. Besides, I have money."

"I almost wish you had not. Don't look so surprised, my darling. You know how little your money weighs in my love—that you could not be less my queen and jewel if you had not a penny; but others will not look at it in that light. They will say—"

"Does it matter what they say, Merle? No one who knows us well will think ill or meanly of us; and for the rest, need we care?"

"There is one person I care about very much—your father. He may think it the

basest presumption in me. Enid, have you reflected? He may refuse to consent altogether."

"I think not," she said, brightly. "His great care is my happiness, and mine is yours. He will not refuse if I tell him that. Besides, you do not want to take me away soon—not for years, you know. By that time, Jack may have brought papa another daughter; or he could live with us, if he still needed me most. Don't fear, Merle; it will all come right."

"Perhaps—" still hesitatingly—"but still—Enid, do you think—you don't, do you?—that we need tell him at once—not till I've seen my way a little, eh?"

Her great grey eyes opened in most unaffected surprise.

"Not tell him yet! Why, Merle, I've never had even a little secret from dear papa all my life. Fancy keeping this, of all others. That would be distrusting his goodness. Oh, I see you were joking. You couldn't have meant it."

Merle did not answer; for they were ascending the steps of the house, and it was at once evident to both that something unusual had happened within.

The hall door stood wide open, and leaning against it was a sort of improvised stretcher. Two labouring men, with pale faces and awe-struck looks, stood within, talking in whispers with one of the railway guards. A maid stood near, crying bitterly, with her face hidden in her apron; and both on the stretcher and the smock-frocks of the men appeared stains, still wet and red—like blood!

Enid's entrance seemed to startle them all. The strangers drew back, not answering her eager inquiries; and the girl dropped her apron, pale and staring.

"Oh! miss, I thought you was in. Oh! Mr. Merle, stop her—please tell her! The poor dear master—"

"What is it?" asked Merle, sternly, and putting his arm round Enid, who had staggered, and grown suddenly white.

"Oh! sir, Mr. Jack's just had 'im carried upstairs! The doctor's there—but he's quite dead!—killed in a moment, Jones says! Oh! sir—Mr. Merle!—look at Miss—I oughtn't to ha' told her!"

For Enid had dropped, as though shot through the heart; and Merle, raising her in his arms, carried her into the library, and laid her on the sofa—letting no one else

touch or speak to her. It was his right now to guard her; and Enid had fainted for the first time in all her life.

TWO NIGHTS IN THE COUNTRY.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "HIS AT LAST."

IN TWO CHAPTERS.—II.

AS I neared Branston Hall, early next morning, I became conscious of that unwashed feeling which always comes over a man after sitting up in his clothes all night. I had started before it was light, in order to arrive in time to retire to my room before being discovered by any of my cousins; but the way proved longer than I anticipated, and, in spite of all my endeavours, it was nine a.m. before I drew rein at the lodge gates. Sneaking up by the side of the drive, I intended going round to the stables, and so gaining entrance with the strictest secrecy. I had ridden to within a hundred yards of the house. I saw the library window, and could catch a gleam of the roaring fire inside, as the rays danced on the old-fashioned mullions. They were all at breakfast. Now was the perilous moment; once past that window and I was safe. Not a sound was to be heard as we gently walked over the fast-melting snow, when suddenly the silence was broken by the sharp yapping of a little cur of a dog. In my vexation, I raised my long riding-whip and administered so sound a cut to the offending animal that, with a suppressed howl of pain, he vanished into the bushes.

The game was up; the library window was ablaze with merry eyes, and the library roof echoed to the sound of joyous laughter. To see a lot of fresh, happy faces (for had they not had their breakfast?) peering from a warm, comfortable room, laughing at you—worn, hungry, tired, and unwashed—outside, is a trial to any man's feelings; more so when you are especially anxious of appearing to advantage in the eyes of one you love. Making the best of the situation, I rode boldly up to the window, and exclaimed, in not the most amiable of tones—

"It's all very well for you all to stand in a jolly warm room laughing, but it's no joke to a hungry man outside, particularly when he has had a near thing of sleeping out in the snow all night."

I was now the hero of the day. There was not a woman's heart in that assembly

which did not bleed for me; not that I cared for their kind thoughts. I had only looked for one face, and a glance told me of two dark circles round those dear eyes. I was not displeased at that—it showed I had been missed, perhaps watched for. I forgot that I had had no breakfast.

The chaff from the men and the sympathy of the women, which greeted my appearance in the library, I pass over; suffice it to say, I did not forget that I had had no breakfast when once fairly launched among the breakers of that meal.

When I entered the drawing-room after dinner that evening, I found all my cousins seated in a ring round the large fire; and as each of us came into the room, we naturally dropped into a seat by the side of our favourite. Thus it was not many minutes before I found myself seated on a low stool by the side of the fireplace, a large screen behind, and only Di between me and the wall.

Here was an opportunity for me to walk over the course, the buzz of conversation being loud and continuous. If we had been alone, I should have put my arm round her, and that would have rendered matters considerably easier; but being in public, I had entirely to put my trust in the eloquence of my eyes and pathos of my voice. In these cases, everything depends on the way you start; and while I was thinking of something remarkable to say, Di, impatient of the delay, broke in, and gave me an opening.

"Poor dear little Tiny has never come back. I have hunted all through the house, and my maid has been into all the servants' rooms, and not a trace can we find of him anywhere."

"He is sure to turn up before night," said I, thinking of the bad shilling.

"But is it not extraordinary that he should be the first to welcome you, and then run off, and be seen no more? I think he is quite like Argus, who turned his head, saw his master, and died of happiness."

"Then I am glad his mistress has not followed his example," said I, blunderingly, thinking that all hope would vanish if my share in the disappearance of the pet were known.

"The little brute is safe to be hiding somewhere," thought I. "A dog that is not worth twopence has never the luck to get lost."

"I did not know he was so fond of you till this morning," continued Di.

"I had hardly dared to hope I was so remembered," said I, looking straight into her eyes.

"I shall be so lonely without him," murmured she.

"I know one who would willingly take his place—one who would be quite as faithful, trustful, and ten thousand times more loving. Might I—dare I hope that you would receive him instead—not as a pet for a time, but for life?"

"I would have both."

I was silenced. It was all very well for me to make use of the dog to get to my point, but quite another thing for her to class me with the little cur.

"Then you will not go shares?"

"You should not have let me come here if you only meant to laugh at my love. You knew how I liked you, and of course must have guessed what I was coming down for. There is nothing on earth I would not do for you, Di, though you would not lift a finger for me."

"That is not true. I forgive you striking my dog—there!—and will have you for life, even if I never see Tiny again."

"If I lose my appointment by staying, I will not leave Branston until I have found him," whispered I, full of contrition.

Her answer was drowned in the peals of laughter that burst forth from the rest of the group round the fire.

"Now, George," said Sir John, "it is your turn. You must tell us the next."

"The next what?" exclaimed I, at a total loss as to his meaning.

"Bless the boy!" laughed my uncle, "where have his ears been all this time that he has not heard what has been going on?"

And the next moment I was directed by at least two dozen voices to give them a ghost story instant. Everybody had been doing it, and it was now my turn.

Storytelling was not my forte; so, in sheer desperation, I had recourse to mine host's of the previous night; and, much mangled, and, I am afraid to say, shorn of its true beauties, I gave them the story of the Guytrash of Harrup Bar.

Then Di was called on, and, with great mystery, recounted how the Branston Ghost was a tall, pale lady, dressed in white, who was accustomed to perambulate the corridors at night, gathering up her skirts with a

faint rustle as she passed the door of any room occupied by a member of the family; and when all the passages had been thus traversed, she halted at the top of the stairs, shook out her dress with a prolonged rustle, deliberately took from under her left arm a head; which, stooping down, she placed gently on the edge of the first step, and then, releasing her hold, let it slowly roll downstairs, nickety-nock, like a stone in Carisbrook well. As the head reached the bottom step, it turned its ghastly eyes up at the rigid figure above, and both vanished at the same moment.

Had she seen it? No, for the house was restored before her time; and the ghost, not being a reformer, disappeared with the alterations. But papa knew all about it.

Here Sir John was overpowered by a storm of inquiries, to all of which he seemed unwilling to reply, and put off the most pertinent queries with good-natured jokes. His hesitation, however, showed me there was more truth in the story than at present he chose to acknowledge; which determined me, when my cousins had retired, to question my uncle somewhat more closely concerning this ghost, the palpable solution to the Harrup one having emboldened me not to put much faith in the spiritual fraternity.

"Of course, some legend or got-up story is at the bottom of this ghost," said I, drawing my chair close up to the fire when the room was quiet.

"There is a story, and a true one too, I believe, which I have no objection to telling you, though I wished to ignore its existence before your young cousins. It is all very enjoyable hearing about other families' ghosts; but when it comes to your own, it is too near home to be pleasant. I noticed, when Di finished, several young eyes turned furtively in the direction of the dark corners of the room; so thought it best to change the current of ideas, well knowing what it was as a child to suffer from a belief in ghosts."

"Then you have heard, seen, or known about this one?"

"George," said my uncle, looking straight at the fire, "there is something about this ghost I have never been able to explain; so I think it best first to tell you the origin of the phenomenon, then my own experience, and let you draw your own conclusions."

"Agreed," said I.

THE LEGEND OF THE BRANSTON GHOST.

"It seems the first knight, Sir Hubert, when quite young, was married by his parents to his cousin, the heiress of Branston. Soon after the marriage he left for Germany, to fight under the banners of Gustavus Adolphus, and fall in love with a lovely Hungarian. In the meantime, the old Lord of Branston sickened and died, leaving his daughter sole heiress to all his lands. She sent off at once to tell her husband in Germany, and implore him to come back and take possession of his estates; but Sir Hubert was so enamoured with his Continental life, that, instead of returning, he sent a messenger to say he was dead. His wife, having been too young when they married to have any but the faintest recollection of him, soon found consolation in a less warlike husband. Unfortunately for her, their happiness was of short duration, as he died before their son was born, leaving his young widow broken-hearted to mourn his loss.

"After many years, Sir Hubert, tired of his foreign life, returned to England, breathing out vengeance on the head of the supposed successor to his estates; for he had heard of his wife's second marriage, but not of the death of her husband and birth of her son. Great was his surprise to find her dressed in widow's weeds; but thinking it was a device got up to allay his suspicions, he accused her of it, and demanded, in brutal terms, the production of his rival. It was in vain she assured him he was no more—that only brought forth such fearful maledictions, that, fearful of her son's life, she determined to hide him from the power of this remorseless man; so conveyed him secretly to a little chamber in the well-tower, where she visited him nightly, but always at different hours, for fear of being detected; and brought him food on which he subsisted, together with water drawn from the well.

"Sir Hubert, being still convinced that his rival was in hiding, feigned a deep sleep one night, and watched his wife get up, look furtively round the room, take some provisions from under a skin, and steal softly out. Seizing his sword, he followed. She glided swiftly along the corridor, paused, and listened at the head of the staircase, and then went rapidly on, gathering up her skirts as she passed the doors of his kinsfolk, through fear of disturbing their slum-

bers. Thus, unperceived by her, he dogged her steps to the well-tower, and saw her disappear behind a door.

"Creeping gently up, he stood for a second listening to the subdued tones within—a man's voice and a woman's.

"He had found his rival at last. Grasping his sword, he opened the door, to see his wife sitting on a low stone pallet, caressing the fair head of a youth by her side.

"Rushing into the room, he flung her on the ground, and with one blow severed the youth's head from his body; then, taking it up on the point of his sword, he carried it to the edge of the well, where, resting it on the first step, he drew out his sword, and let it roll down.

"As the head reached the last step, before plunging into the water, it paused for an instant, while the blue eyes looked up with a heavenly expression at the distracted figure of the mother above.

"It is said Sir Hubert was so horrified when the eyes opened, that he stood for some time transfixed to the spot; and when at length he turned, his wife was gone, never to be seen in bodily form again, though from that night her spirit haunted the house.

"The shock, however, made Sir Hubert an altered man. He had the body interred in the family vault, and you can still see in the records a note of so many marks to pay for masses to be sung for the repose of the soul of the youth.

"So much for the legend. Now for my own experience.

"I remember perfectly well, when a child, lying awake night after night bathed in cold dew, and with every pulse throbbing with fright, waiting to hear the dull thud of the head as it rolled down the stairs."

"But did you hear it?"

"Most certainly. I make allowances for childish fancies and conjured-up noises; but still, when stripped of all illusions, I am convinced that I did hear, not once but constantly during my visits to my grandfather, a sound as of a hard substance rolling slowly down from step to step."

"Then how came it that you never saw it?"

"In the first place, I was too young to encounter the risk of meeting it; secondly—and this is what makes it distinct from other ghosts—it never came at the same time."

"How do you account for that?"

"I can give no explanation, and can only refer you to the story I have just narrated, and ask you to notice that it particularly remarks, 'She never stole forth to see her son at the same hour of the night, and always gathered up her skirts as she passed the rooms of his kinsfolk, for fear of awaking them.' Now, before the bumping of the head, I always heard a faint rustle outside my room as of a lady drawing away her dress, for fear of its brushing against the door."

"Did any one ever see it?"

"Members of the family? Yes. But no stranger ever—that is, as far as my own knowledge goes. But I have heard my father say he once asked his grandfather, old Sir Guy, the son of the first Sir Hubert (who married again in his old age), whether he knew the ghost? Which question brought down such a storm of indignation on my father's head that he never ventured to repeat his question; and, to all my inquiries, always gave but one reply—that he would never help to keep alive the disgrace of his ancestors."

"How did you get rid of it at last?"

"My father shut up the house, and went to live at the Manor; and there I remained after him until I found my family getting uncomfortably large for the house, so that turned my attention to the old Hall. I sent for an architect, and together we planned out the improvements. All the floors in the passages leading to the private apartments were to be taken up, and new planks laid; then, with many regrets, I decreed that the old well-tower should come down, my great object being to do away with the ghost, and so make the house habitable for children and servants.

"When all the alterations were finally settled upon, I determined to remove to the Hall, and stay there myself while the dismantling went on, in order to be on the spot should any solution to the mystery turn up.

"Unluckily, the very day I was to go I met with a severe accident in the hunting field, which laid me up for so long a time, that when at last I was able to take up my quarters at Branston, the alterations were far advanced. So anxious was I to know if my improvements had been of the slightest use in allaying the unquiet spirit of the ghost, that I settled to pass the first night

in the room we are now sitting in; as, with the door propped open, I could command the whole view of the staircase.

"I shall never forget how slow the time seemed to pass. I ran over the whole course of my own life, and that of each of my ancestors, looked at my watch, and discovered it was past twelve. Any time now I might hear the familiar sounds. Placing my chair directly opposite the open door, and setting down by my side a lantern, I had got ready for emergencies.

"I sat down to listen and watch. Once I thought I caught the slightest rustle; but I waited in vain for the dull thud of the head against the stairs. All at once I became aware of a draught of wind. It did not pass me, but seemed to be floating about the house. It gave the impression of some one gliding through the passages at great speed, with garments wafting about. As strangely as it commenced, it suddenly ceased; and then I was startled by so curious a sound that, seizing my lantern, I rushed upstairs, and at once directed my steps to the strangers' corridor, as from thence proceeded the weird sounds of cracking, bumping, and tumbling about that had so astonished me when below.

"As I raised my lantern above my head to get a straight look down the corridor, what was my surprise to find all the spare furniture I had seen so neatly piled up and covered with carpets by the workmen in the afternoon, strewn about the floor.

"When I made inquiries the next morning, I found that, while the men were removing the rubbish from the bottom of the well the day before, they came across the skull of a young man, which, through some superstitious dread, they buried at once without telling me."

"And your solution is," said I, "the lady, not finding the head in its accustomed unburied place, rushed about the house looking for it, and so created the current of air. In despair at not finding it, she searched in the piles of furniture, and so strewed them on the floor. Eventually, finding that the head had been buried, she gave up her visitations, seeing that the object of her nightly visits had been attained."

"I do not hesitate to acknowledge that that is very much my interpretation; and I know for a fact she has never been heard or seen from that day to this."

After bidding Sir John good night, I carefully bolted my door, and walked to the fire.

"Wish he had not said this," thought I, looking around the large, old-fashioned, wainscoted room, full of dark corners. There was the great four-poster, hung with red curtains, closely drawn—this in itself was a ghostly object; there were heavy oak chests with drawers; but what again most attracted my notice was the curious old carved crimson velveted arm-chair, standing on the right of the fireplace. This had already nearly got me into trouble; for I had been so struck with its rare carving—which, together with the delay caused by the loss of a stud, had made me so late for dinner—that I had only time to kidnap Di on the threshold of the dining-room, and lead her triumphantly to her seat; so, resisting its attractions this time, I determined to make up for my uncomfortable quarters of yesterday by enjoying a good night's rest.

Somehow, I kept putting off the unholy hour when the candle would be extinguished, and I should be left to the tender mercies of my uncle's ancestors. I wrote a note to my mother, thought of my cousins, found myself repeating the same thing over and over again, while the air seemed gradually thickening. I knew perfectly well there was nothing behind the door but a long, low oak chest; yet I could have sworn to an old man sitting on it, bent down, with hands clasped tight on his knees as if in sudden pain. Then the arm-chair creaked!

I turned—my pulse beat—I felt my hair give an extra curl. Why not? Byron says Hassan's beard curled with ire. Why not my hair with—expectation? I certainly thought I saw a difference about the chair—nothing distinct, but a haziness, a blue film, from out of which flashed a clear, bright yellow light, like the eye of a Cyclopan animal. Why I thought so I cannot say. I never saw a one-eyed animal.

Rousing myself, I proceeded cautiously to the chair, never once taking my eye off the shining light. As I advanced, the blue film faded away. On reaching the chair, I bent over the bright object, touched it, took it up, and discovered my lost stud, which, in my examination before dinner, must have dropped out on to the chair, and lain there ever since.

This gave me renewed zeal. I felt myself, myself. Do not ask my sisters what

that is, for they have no sympathy with any one but a long-legged parson, with a voice like a watchman's; but if you want to know, ask a certain handsome cousin of mine. She will tell you I am tall, clever, courageous, with light wavy hair, eloquent hazel eyes, and a mouth when it smiles which lits! "But on their own merits modest men are dumb!"

To return to this eventful night.

Even when divested of man's inventions, the strange, chilly feeling still clung to me. I considered it was caused by the long journey from town, charging through drifts of snow, a restless uncomfortable night, early ride when hungry, together with the novelty of seeing so many faces—for I lived rather the life of a recluse in London; and then, at the top of all this, in order to steady my shaken nerves, the conversation I had had with my uncle late that night.

The finding of the stud, however, completely scattered all further illusions. I put out the candle, and walked deliberately backwards to the bed, having been taught in the days of my youth always to watch out the last spark, for fear of it setting the house on fire. First I got entangled in a fearful complication of curtains; but, extricating myself neatly from them, I plunged boldly into bed, down my feet went to the bottom—no, not to the bottom, for before they had got very far down they came in contact with a wet, cold, clammy substance, and the next moment I felt seized by the right foot, as there issued from the bed the sound of intermittent thunder.

I had been expecting this. I knew there was always something disagreeable in every house, and generally more so in old ones than new. Here was a situation for a poor, defenceless man, in a strange room, fire nearly out, one foot disabled, and a total ignorance as to the locality of the matches!

I jumped up, seized the poker, stirred the fire, and returned to the bed. With one hand I flung back the clothes, with the other prepared for mortal combat with the foe.

The foe!—there, curled up, and quietly drying his dripping coat between my sheets, lay Di's little pet dog!

Ah, what a little treasure he seemed now, for had not I vowed to restore him to her?

Putting down the poker, I began to address him in insinuating terms. I begged him to come down, I implored him to move, I besought him to look at the fire; to all

of which he vouchsafed nothing but a suppressed growl and an unholy glimmer from the corner of his visible eye.

Finding him deaf to all persuasion, I began stirring him gently with the smutty end of the poker; but this assault on my part brought forth such a succession of snarls and snaps at the poker's end, that, fearful of waking Di, I was obliged to desist. No, I had had my innings in the morning, and he meant now to have his revenge, and a cruel one too, by keeping me, for the second night in succession, out of bed.

Question. Should I take him by the scruff of the neck, and fling him to the other end of the room, thereby running the risk of getting my fingers snapped, and losing the good opinion of my cousin for ever; or, like a dignified Indian, wrap my blanket around me, and let intellect triumph over brutality?

The latter was best—I could not give up Di; so, composing myself in the ghostly arm-chair, I fell fast asleep.

"I am glad Tiny paid you out for your ill-temper to him yesterday; for now I have not his battles to fight, I can answer your questions with an unbiased mind," said Di, as we stood behind the screen in the drawing-room, saying good-bye.

"Then I may come down in the summer, and take you back?"

"Yes."

"And you will not mind the dirt and smoke of London?"

"No. I shall be too happy to see it; for if you are so kind to my little wretch of a dog, how—"

"Much more loving shall I be to you?" put in I, as I bade her adieu.

And that is how I spent my two nights in the country.

ONLY A YEAR.

CHAPTER VI.

"IS IT TO BE PEACE OR WAR, PHILLIS?"

"I HAVE been a very troublesome guest, I'm afraid," said Miss Kyriel to her host, after breakfast; "and now I must apply to you for some means of getting home."

"I always hate a thaw, but I never ob-

jected to one so much as I do now," was the answer.

"I suppose you felt bound to make some absurd remark; so, now that you have done it very nicely, will you answer my appeal?"

"Everything I have is at Miss Kyriel's service. I have here at present a brougham, a mail phaeton, and a double dogcart. In which would you like to go home?"

"I suppose poor Dickie could not carry me?"

"I think Dickie will be much more prudent if he allows me the pleasure of his society a few days longer. But there is John Peel, if you would rather ride."

This offer was accepted, and it was settled that she was to go immediately after luncheon.

Phillis heard Thyrlle send the order for the horse and the groom, but she felt just a little piqued that he showed no sign of escorting her himself. She was accustomed to expect very much attention. He met her on the stairs as she came down to luncheon.

"Miss Kyriel," he began, embarrassed, "as I don't know about—if you would like me to go with you—"

"Don't, pray, give yourself unnecessary trouble on my account," returned Phillis, regretting the haughty words the moment they were spoken.

He passed up the stairs, after a quiet "Thank you," and Phillis was rather agreeably surprised to see that he was in riding array when he came down.

It was a rather mild day, and the ride to Hallingford was very pleasant. Thyrlle pointed out where the drift had been, and Phillis, with some pride, made him look through the great gates at Hensley Towers, up one of the finest avenues in the county.

Arrived at the farthest side of Hallingford, Thyrlle paused.

"I will say good-bye now, Miss Kyriel."

"Oh, won't you come on with me to the Manor House? Please, do. They will all be so glad to see you."

"I thought you did not wish it," he answered.

"I don't know what unlucky thing I can have said by which you have arrived at that idea. You really must not be offended by my hasty speeches. I apologize if I said anything rude."

Such eyes must have conquered with their

soft pleading had the words been unspoken. Thyrlle rode with her as far as the entrance gates to the Manor House, but no entreaties, no imploring looks could take him one yard farther. As he held her hand a moment in saying good-bye, she said—

"You don't forget, do you, that you owe me something for the locket?"

"No—what is it?"

"You shall know some day—soon. Good-bye."

Thyrlle rode away, and Phillis, followed by his groom, slowly approached the house. Her entrance to the drawing-room was greeted by many questions. Her note had been received, but she was obliged to then and there give a full description of the manners and customs at Merresford. After a brief sketch of Miss Mason, Mrs. Kyriel remarked—

"But the nephew, Phillis—this Mr. Thyrlle. You don't mean to say he is a gentleman?"

"It depends so entirely on your definition of a gentleman," Phillis returned, carelessly.

"You know what mother means, Phil," said Gilfred. "Is he presentable, really and truly?"

"Most emphatically, yes."

"He is, indeed," chimed in Mr. Brooke; "I think you would like him, Kyriel. He is a real good fellow. Rather proud and touchy, I believe; but the right sort—whatever his grandmothers or aunts may be."

Phillis bestowed upon the young officer a look which amply repaid him for this testimony, and which set his heart beating unpleasantly fast for the next half-hour.

"Well, whatever he or his aunt may be," observed Gilfred, "and whatever other people may choose to do, *we* must call on them, after their civility to Phillis."

The next morning Miss Kyriel announced her intention of walking over to Akenhurst, to see the Graingers.

"Phillis!" exclaimed her brother, impatiently, "I wish you would not go there."

"And why, pray?"

Phillis knew as well as he did that he was anxious she should not meet Hasson Grainger, but she also knew he would not say so. He was silent, and Phillis went on—

"You know, Kittie, we promised Grace and Lucy we would go over to luncheon some morning; and to-day is tolerably fine—what do you say?"

Now, Kittie stood a little in awe of both her brother and sister. So she only said, hesitatingly—

"I don't care; as you like."

So they went. A pleasant walk, poor little Kittie found it, too, for Mr. Brooke escorted them; and although his attentions were, as usual, entirely directed to Phillis, yet Kittie could not hope to rival her sister, and was very content even in his society.

In a cosy morning room they found two bright-eyed, pretty girls, who were engaged in trifling work. Phillis and Kittie were enthusiastically greeted; but even Mr. Brooke's somewhat prejudiced eyes could see correctly enough how they both admired and looked up to Phillis. It was "Phil" must be shown their work. The new dog, Diogenes, must be brought for "Phil" to see; Hasson had brought him. Oh! did Phil know that Hasson had come back—quite unexpectedly, and had brought this dog and given him to Grace?

Mr. Hasson and Diogenes were both sent for. Diogenes was produced first, and, while Lucy put him through some tricks for the benefit of Kittie and Mr. Brooke, Grace drew Phillis aside.

"Poor Hasson is in sad disgrace with papa, Phil," she said, her eyes filling; "and now dear mamma is not here to speak for him, we don't know what to do."

"What has he done now?" inquired Phillis.

"Oh, we don't know, of course. I dare say it is some debt or money trouble, as usual. Papa won't come out of his rooms till-dinner time, and then will hardly speak to Hasson."

The door opened, and admitted the subject of this dialogue—a singularly handsome man. He was tall, but rather slightly made, and possessed a face of uncommon beauty. Rich, wavy, light brown hair was carelessly pushed off a brow as fair as Phillis's; dark blue eyes and regular features were among the gifts nature had bestowed on Hasson Grainger. He had been the idol of his mother, be his cause good or bad—and it was generally the latter. She had ever espoused it; but now, when she was dead, Mr. Grainger could no longer be blinded to his son's faults and delinquencies. So Hasson, having disposed of his allowance for a year in little more than a month, and finding further supplies impossible to obtain, had returned home with eightpence in his

pocket, and was lounging and yawning away his hours at Akenhurst.

As a distance of scarcely two miles separated Akenhurst from the Manor House, and the young people of each family were much of the same ages, they had been intimate from childhood; yet, well accustomed as she had been all her life to hear her name spoken thus by him, Miss Kyriel's white skin coloured brightly as, advancing quickly to take her hand, Hasson Grainger exclaimed—

"Is it you, Phil? By Jove, how glad I am to see you!"

He received a rather constrained welcome, and his attention was immediately directed to Kittie and Mr. Brooke. But after a few remarks to them he returned to Phillis, and, as far as looks and tones are expressive, showed her and others that he thought her lovelier than ever. After luncheon, Mr. Hasson Grainger accompanied Phillis back to the Manor House. In spite of the efforts of Mr. Brooke to prevent a tête-à-tête, Phillis and Hasson fell so far behind himself and Kittie that it was inevitable. For not only Hasson, but Phillis was intending to have an uninterrupted conversation.

"You have forgotten old times, I suppose, Phil?" Hasson began, plaintively. "A young lady who has been the belle of a London season, with half the town at her feet, isn't likely to remember a poor unlucky devil like me."

"That speech being a very foolish one, I sha'n't take the trouble to answer it."

But she had some trouble to conceal her anger at its audacity.

Hasson laughed.

"Lost none of your airs, Miss Phil. Well, they are all pretty; and, in sober, honest truth, I have seen no one equal to you all the time I have been away."

Phillis smiled a very scornful smile.

"What folly you talk! I can hear remarks of this original nature any day. I'm sorry I can't compliment you in return on the brilliance your conversational powers have acquired by travel. How dreadfully wet this field is!"

"Wet!" echoed her companion, discontentedly. "This is the most beastly climate in the world. The country was something like a foot deep in snow a couple of days ago."

Phillis had been leading up, and she caught at this.

"Snow! I should think so—I was snowed up," she said, laughing.

"How do you mean?"

"I had the most wonderful adventure out hunting. My horse fell lame—snow-storm came on—lost my way—gallant rescue by a stranger, who, like the good Samaritan, placed me on his own beast; and, after four or five hours in the snow, we arrived at my deliverer's own house. Quite materials for a fairy tale."

"And who is the fairy prince? if I may venture so delicate a question," was the rejoinder, sarcastically spoken.

"I haven't finished my story. I was sumptuously entertained—found a convenient fairy godmother to chaperone me—and was kept a couple of nights and a day in the fairy castle by a great drift in the Hallingford-road. Don't you think it is all very thrilling?"

"Ah! That drift was on the other side of Hallingford, I heard," he said, with a quick glance in her face—"near Merresford."

"Yes. Do you know who has taken Merresford?"

"No," he answered.

But she did not believe him. She kept her glance on his changing face.

"It is a young man called Thyrlé—Archer Thyrlé. Do you know him?"

He met her eyes for a moment, and his dropped. For a full minute he was silent; and during that time his mind, carried back by the once familiar name, pictured a sun-lighted beach in the north, where the Irish Channel flashed and glittered under the blue sky. Years ago, it was—five—six—eight: it seemed a lifetime—since he had loved Alice Graham, and been the friend of Archer Thyrlé. But he paused long enough to recover himself.

"I saw in the local paper that Merresford had been bought by a man of that name," he answered.

"I don't think that is what I asked," she returned. "I said, Do you know Mr. Thyrlé?"

"No, Phil, I don't know him—nor do I care to."

"Let me put my question in another form—Did you ever know him?"

Another swift glance at the past, and he resolved to ignore it.

"No," he said, "never."

And she thought—"Liar! You did know

him. Why will you not, or dare you not, acknowledge it?" But she went on gaily enough to tell him that this Mr. Thyrlé was the hero of her fairy tale; and further told—with some mischievous pleasure at the restiveness it caused in Hasson's demeanour—how well he rode, what a remarkably good figure he possessed, what a perfect gentleman he was—"though I've heard he has nothing in the way of high family to boast of"—what a well-appointed house he kept, what a splendid stud of horses!

Mr. Grainger, having expressed his ignorance on the subject, scarcely knew how to enlighten Phillis as to the mining experiences of Thyrlé père, and chafed as he listened.

"He was a coalheaver's son, or something of that kind," he observed at length.

"Then you did know something of him?"

"I only repeat what I have heard."

"Oh, but one never can believe stories of that kind. I wish coalheavers' sons were more rife than they are, if it is true."

"And how soon will it be safe to congratulate Mr. Thyrlé?" inquired Hasson, in a tone of bitter irony.

Phillis felt she had gone too far. She had gleaned nothing beyond what she already knew; and in praising Thyrlé she had given a terrible handle to Hasson. She replied, in her haughtiest manner—

"You may congratulate Mr. Thyrlé on whatever you choose, when it may suit you to renew his acquaintance."

They were at the Manor House gates now, and she neither looked at nor spoke to Mr. Grainger until they reached the hall door. Then he said, in a very low voice—

"Is it to be peace or war, Phillis?"

She cast him one contemptuous glance, and said, in a tone of almost insulting indifference—

"I really don't know what you are talking about."

TEN O'CLOCK AT THE MONUMENT.

AND there we met, a party of five, all told, on, without exception, the finest day we had last autumn.

Bang! The report of a cannon, close to where we are now located, makes us jump. It is our parting salute at London Bridge pier, from which we are just starting on board the *Alexandra* on her last trip for

the season to "Gravesend, Southend, Sheerness, and round the Great Eastern. Single fare 2s., return 3s."

Before the collector comes round, we decide (from information we have received) not to take return tickets, as we have determined to go on board the Big Ship, and have a good look over her.

We see which way the wind blows, and settle nicely abaft the funnel, out of the smoke, preferring our own smoke to any other. We believe in doctors who take their own physic, and we order a draught from one who declares that he could live on it.

"Ease her, stop her, turn her astern!" all shouted in one breath, make us jump up, and, looking anxiously ahead, we find ourselves very nearly on board of a much smaller craft than our own, which has had the temerity or stupidity to attempt to cross our bows. Our skipper puts it down to the latter, and gives the occupants of the wherry a bit of his mind, which, judging from the said bit, is filled with feelings anything but respectful to the aforesaid passengers and crew of the above-mentioned obstacle. However, we have had to cave in, and the animals—quadrupeds we call them—getting the bit between their teeth, do as they please with us.

But we get used to this kind of thing; for the tide having now turned, barges, laden and unladen, float lazily about all over the road, sticking so closely to one another, that we wonder how on earth (or water) we shall get through. Axiom: The best of friends must part. So must barges; for the little *Martin*, giving us the go-by, is flitting, now this way, now that way, then ahead, gradually picking her way among the sluggards, now and then coaxingly elbowing them aside, and occasionally getting hold of one by the nose, and swinging it round as if it were on a pivot. The animated unit in charge thereof thanks our pioneer by exhausting his vocabulary of superlative expletives thereat, as he drops astern. We pour in a broadside of chaff, and leave the aforesaid unit to the sympathies of those, his fellow-craftsmen, who have many a time and oft been served likewise. So we creep along, and presently see a tolerably clear road ahead.

This corpulent old dame here is rather a nuisance, though. There are plenty of spare seats elsewhere; yet she insists, both argumentatively and actually, in pushing our

three bottles of "Guinness" and five tumblers—by and by, they are six—close together on the seat, which we are using partly as a table, and depositing her stuffy self on the other end. Never mind, we are out for a pleasure trip, and don't mean to quarrel; so Tom stands up for a look about him, leaving more room for me and the glasses.

Greenwich! Yes, there it is, and we wonder (forgive our simple ignorance, ye who have done the Grand Tour, Cook cicerone) whether Venice is much more beautiful than our dear old cockney Greenwich, on such a lovely day as this.

Bang! Bother—we jump up again, and—well, it really is bother, for the corpulent old dame aforesaid, not having jumped up when we did, is now seated on the deck, the bottles emptying their remainders into her lap, and the tumblers keeping them affectionate company. The tumblers are now six, though not all of a size. Poor old soul! we can't help joining in the hearty laugh at her expense, her vehement and uncomplimentary epithets notwithstanding. It is an ill wind that blows nobody good, and the aforesaid stuffiness of our corpulent friend has saved our pockets to the extent of the reputed value of five glasses and three (reputed) pint bottles.

The good creature is not a teetotaler (nasal evidence unimpeachable); yet, from what we could gather from her soliloquy, she would rather not have had so much gratuitous refreshment. We must not—indeed, could not—be ungallant, though; so we assist her to find her feet, and, declining our most courteous invitation to crack a bottle with us, she glides majestically to fresh fields and pastures new.

We begin to feel hungry. We read the bill of fare—"Dinner in the saloon at one o'clock: cold, 2s. 6d.; hot, 3s.; with poultry, 3s. 6d." So, as we don't kill a pig every day, we carry the poultry ticket nem. con.

We feel at least a shilling's worth of satisfaction at having got so far—that is (like the "Beloved eye, beloved star"), so near—the comfort of a good dinner; yet, on second thoughts, it being not yet twelve o'clock, we are unpleasantly far off too.

We take a stroll; look into the cook's cabin, and have a chat at the door with him who is now a very great friend in need, relating, in our own most vivid style, freely illustrated, how the three bottles

and five tumblers tumbled on to a larger tumbler, &c., &c.—for which tale we feel amply rewarded by getting a sniff of nice somethings hereafter; though, at the same time, we begin to suffer from an attack of oil-stone on the appetite. We continue to stroll, and we look at the engines, airing our knowledge thereof by pointing out to each other the slide valves, plumber blocks, eccentrics, &c., &c., and cap the whole with a very shrewd hint that the bearings look a little heated. The upturned face of the engineer stamps out all our conceit, as we read that contemptuous curl on his lip, so we away.

Having awayed, we reach the upper deck again. That bang was our salute at Woolwich pier. We were just in time to see our startler fed (we should say loaded; but then we are hungry, and that is a sharp thorn, you know)—well, fed with a little loose powder from the palm of a hand, a wad rammed home with a short poker, a little more powder out of the aforesaid palm on touch-hole, fusee struck and applied to last-named; then the little brass cannon says bang, as if in anger at the indignity of the entire proceedings.

It appears that we are going to salute every pier down the river to-day, as it is our closing day, although the band are telling brazen falsehoods by playing "It is our opening day." We forgive them, for they can and do play Bishop's glees decently, and we live some of our youthful days over again while listening to the well-known tune, "Auld Lang Syne," at parting from every pier—wonderfully ambiguous, though, owing to the vocal performances of sundry ancient-looking fellow passengers, who evidently "always join in in 'Auld Lang Syne', and always stand up in the polka." We wonder audibly how it is that all those pocket handkerchiefs which have been strung up from stem to stern ever since we started are not yet dry enough to come down, and we hide our diminished heads when informed by one of the aforesaid ancients that they are flags, and intended to make us look cheerful. We feel rather so just now, as there may be a chance of luck, it not being washing day, although it is our closing day. Ancient informer evidently does not approve of our mirth, and observes that we are "going ahead a bit."

We quite agree with him, for we are now within sight of Gravesend, and we rub

our hands in anticipation of soon trying the edge of, and taking the edge off, our appetites. There's old Windmill Hill; and we expatiate on the excellence and economy of the ninepenny teas, "including shrimps or watercresses," that we have many a time had at Silvester's, away there at Springhead. Old Peggy, too, whom we teased by poking our walking sticks through the side of the tent, greatly to the annoyance of the fair ones hearing about their future husbands, children, and other fortunes. Peggy coming out, and, with good-tempered, serio-comical reproof, wheedling us out of "just a copper for poor Peggy."

Happy thought! We shall dine after leaving Gravesend; and we long to say adieu.

"Threepence a pint, sir—fresh 'biled.'"

First we would and then we wouldn't, for fear it might spoil our dinner; but, after all, we do buy a pint of "real Gravesend prawns"—they will do for tea, anyhow.

Our artilleryman has hard work now to come up to time with the little brass popgun, for we have to honour each of the three piers with a puff as we pass. Having puffed and passed, we descend to the saloon; but find, instead of dinner ready, that it will be a full half-hour yet, and, worse still, we have made a mistake (never again!) in not having secured our seats at table. Not a soul there, but plates reversed in all the best places, which, of course you know, are nearest the chairman. However, we make the best of a bad bargain, and cause five more plates to be inverted. We don't like to look hungry if we can help it, so we go on deck again, and from tasting we eventually fall to eating the prawns. They are most delicious—quite a banquet.

The river is lively with shipping, some at anchor, some yielding to the persuasion of the tiny tug—looking down condescendingly thereon, as a handsome woman sometimes does upon her future diminutive "for better and for worse," frequently more of the latter than the former.

What splendid sailing those barges make, and how picturesque they look, with their green sides, amber masts, and Vandyke brown canvas.

Now we smell a smell, although we are not near Barking Creek. We follow our noses and find ourselves at table, almost ashamed to be first there; but then some one must be first, you know. We hear the

dinner bell on deck, and are soon joined by other hungry mortals.

We begin—begin dinner? No; we are the wrong end of the table for attention. We begin hailing a waiter. He must be deaf. We hail more waiters; they are all deaf as posts. We go on hailing, till at last we do manage to get the "drumstick" of a roast duck, foot attached (the engraving in our cookery book must be wrong), with about so much meat on it, or rather so little, that we say it is properly so called. This is the "poultry." We ask for more, and are informed that the said "poultry is off." Judging from the size of our portion, it needed not much muscular exertion when it took to itself wings and made off. Will we take anything else? We say, in despair, roast pork; and we get roast something, between a bung and a bath-brick. Then, after waiting so long that there is little fear of scalding our mouths with the gravy, we get the scrapings of the vegetable dishes from the upper part of the table—

Let us draw a veil over the only unsatisfactory part of our day's trip.

Having swallowed our dinner, we go on deck, and there endeavour to do the same with our disappointment. We cannot, however, refrain from reckoning the probable percentage of profit to the caterers out of our "five at three and six, sir, seventeen and six."

After a little time we look out ahead, and catch the first glimpse of the Big Ship, or rather of the tops of her six masts, lying yonder, behind the banks of the Medway.

"Shall we call at Sheerness pier first?"

"No, sir—sail round first, sir."

"How long shall you stop at Sheerness?"

"Only a few minutes, sir. Return almost directly."

Now we are passing the pier, and the Big Ship, in the distance, disappoints us by appearing so much smaller than we expected; but we get nearer and nearer still, till now we are abreast, and obtain a tolerably good idea of her size by comparison with the insignificance of our own craft. We round her and return to the pier.

"No time for return tickets to land; going back directly."

As we have not return tickets (thanks to the information we had received), we bid defiant adieu to the captain and crew, and go ashore. We have decided upon return-

ing by the last train, eight o'clock from here.

No means of getting on board the *Leviathan* unless we charter a special boat—at a, no doubt, special price.

A colour sergeant, whose acquaintance we make for the time, says, "They'll ask you a mint of money."

We call a council of war, and almost give up the idea, till stifled disappointment breaks out from one of the party thus—"I came down to go over the ship, and what is more, I mean to go"—"And so do I," said another and another, till at last we all agreed again, and determined to go somehow. Eventually we came to terms with a jolly (old) waterman, who, on condition that we assist in working ship, proposes to take us there, wait our pleasure, and bring us back for, "We'll say four bob a head, sir."

"No, say ten shillings for the job, and we go; otherwise, we go also, but not with you."

We have it at our price, and we away. Our sail assists us, our boatman instructs us concerning all things, both naval and military, fully explaining the cause of the prevalent desertion mania, &c., &c. We admire those old hulks, housed in, and looking, minus the snow, as if they had sat for the pictures of "Winter in the Arctic Regions." After a most agreeable little trip we get nearer and nearer, resting occasionally on our oars ("with feather'd spray") to reverence the grand proportions of this monster of the deep. At length we reach the barge, moored alongside, which serves as a landing stage. We climb up thereon; and, for the first time perhaps, this great *Leviathan* looks great indeed. We look upward, and from end to end of this mighty mass of ironwork, calmly sleeping on the surface of the deep, breathing so quietly that we are hushed in mute astonishment; for, as we place our hand upon her side, we feel a slow pulsation caused by the pressure of the wind, and so she gently sways from side to side, till the wind drops, and she too falls asleep.

By kind permission of the officer in charge we ascend the ladder, and after a journey up as many steps as one would find in a good-sized house, we stand upon the deck. And now a feeling of awe at sight of this stupendous building floating on the water, creeps over us, and we think what mere pigmies are we men.

We have seen the Ship at sea, and

although she appeared to be a "big thing," yet that was all. For the mere distant view, or even careful reading of statistics of her vast proportions, conveys no adequate idea of the greatness and grandness of her immensity.

We now proceed to more minute inspection.

The view from end to end of the deck exhibits everything in distant, more distant, and most distant perspective. Separate steam engine for working the paying-out machinery, the recovering gear, the cable windlasses, other windlasses, and last, not least, the steering apparatus. Each of these steam engines of such proportions as would do credit to any large manufactory. The gigantic machinery for laying the telegraph cable; the freezing apparatus, necessary both for the comfort of man in hot climates, and that which is perhaps of more importance, the actual existence of the telegraph cable itself—each tank in which it is carried being furnished with a constant supply of ice to keep the outer covering from softening; the immense anchor cable, a link of which it would be a heavy task to lift by hand; the huge anchors, weighing ten tons a-piece; the miles of ordinary rope of most extraordinary thickness; the steering gear, itself so stupendous, having four wheels on the top deck, at which sixteen men can, and do sometimes, work at once; other auxiliary wheels below, to aid in working the tiller chains if required. As we have said before, there is an independent steam engine for this purpose, which is used when in the open sea; but on nearing port, hand labour is employed.

What shall we say of the main engines themselves; the immense paddle shaft, two enormous cylinders working on each of the two throws of the crank; the steam-pipe, large enough for a water company's grand main; one thousand-horse power, nominal, for the paddle engines; sixteen hundred-horse power, nominal (and that is but a mere fraction of the available horse power), for the screw engines? These latter are on a different principle entirely from the paddle engines, and totally independent. The telegraph dials for conveying instructions from the commanding officer to the engineer and others on board. Long galleries in the very heart of the engines, by which to reach in safety every part of this Titanic machinery, even though it were in motion. Oiling boxes

innumerable, holding quarts a-piece. The immense boilers, side by side, like so many retorts in a gas-house. Looking out at a door on deck, we see the mighty paddle-wheels, resembling in size nothing that we have ever seen before—as it were, a large hippodrome seen through a magnifying glass, each float having the superficial area of the wall of a good-sized room. Dark passages from end to end of the ship, like railway tunnels. The ship, did we say? Why, here we have two ships, one inside the other, with space enough to walk comfortably between them; so that, should the outer one be injured, the inner one would still remain staunch. Then the saloon, like a magnificent dining-room or ball-room, containing furniture enough for a good-sized mansion, chandeliers, looking glasses, mirrors, couches, pianofortes, and every other of the luxuries and conveniences of upholstery. As our guide proceeds, we feel relieved to come again on to the upper deck; for, for an hour and a half, we have been below in one incessant whirl of machinery. We look into a huge vat—one of a few used for storing the cable. We don't look long, for we get giddy at the depth. We mount upon the bridge between the paddle boxes, and here we say, What a terrible amount of responsibility for one human being to have to command this immense vessel, which takes five hundred men to work and attend! What a mind the man must have had who designed such a structure, not merely as an experiment, but confident—absolutely certain—as to its feasibility. Here it is, to justify him and do him honour. We would not heap upon him any panegyrical superlatives; but, in plain, honest truth, we almost reverence his name and genius. From the time we first stepped on board we have been awed into respectful silence by some mighty power. We get some idea, from such a sight as this, of our own littleness.

Bidding good-bye to the few uneaten sheep and porkers housed on deck, which have "done the voyage out and home," and also to our guide, we again join our friend the waterman, below; and, after a most enjoyable sail, we reach Sheerness pier. Here, after recruiting exhausted nature, we take the last train for London, and part company, remarking that there is many a worse way of spending a day than by meeting, for such a trip as this, at ten o'clock at the Monument.

ANGUISH IN PRINT.

IN THE STRICTEST CONFIDENCE.

TEAR THE FIFTH.

RECOGNITION.

AS to dinners at the Cedars, on Sundays we had beef—cold beef—boiled one week, roast the next. On Mondays we had a preparation of brown slime with lumps of the beef in it, and a spiky vandyke of toast round the dish, which was called hash, with an afterpiece of mosh posh pudding—Clara christened it so—and that was plain boiled rice, with a white paste to pour over it out of a butter boat, while the rice itself always tasted of soapsuds. Tuesday was roast shoulder of mutton day. Wednesday, stewed steaks—such dreadful stuff!—which appeared in two phases, one hard and leathery, the other rag and tattery. Thursday, cold roast beef always—when they might just as well have let us have it hot—and pasty wasters, made of those horrible apples, which seemed to last all the year round, except midsummer vacation time, when the stock would be exhausted; but by the time the holidays were over, the new ones came in off the trees—the new crops—and, of course, more sour, and vicious, and bitter than ever. We used to call them vinegar pippins; and I declare if that Patty Smith would not beg them of the cook, and lie in bed and crunch them, while my teeth would be quite set on edge with only listening to her.

Heigho! I declare if it isn't almost as hard work to get through this description of the eatables and drinkables at the Cedars as it was in reality. Let me see, where was I? Oh, at Thursday! Then on Fridays it was shoulder of mutton again, with the gravy full of sixpences; and, as for fat—oh! they used to be so horribly fat, that I'm sure the poor sheep must have lived in a state of bilious headache all their lives, until the butcher mercifully killed them; while—only fancy, at a finishing establishment!—if that odious Patty Smith did not give Clara and me the horrors one night by giving us an account of how her father's man—I must do her the credit of saying that she had no stuck-up pride in her, and never spoke of her "esteemed parent"* as anything but father; for only fancy a "papa," with a greasy red face, cutting steaks, or chopping at a

great wooden block, and crying "What-d'yer-buy—buy—buy?" Let's see—oh! of how her father's man killed the sheep; and I declare it was quite dreadful; and I said spitefully to Clara afterwards that I should write by the next post and tell mamma how nicely my finishing education was progressing, for I knew already how they killed sheep. Well, there is only one more day's fare to describe—Saturday's, and that is soon done, for it was precisely the same as we had on the Wednesday, only the former used mostly to be the tattery days and the latter the hard.

Now, of course, I am aware that I am writing this in a very desultory manner; but, after Mrs. Blunt's rules and regulations, what can you expect? I am writing to ease my mind, and therefore I must write just as I think; and as this is entirely my own, I intend so to do, and those may find fault who like. I did mean to go through the different adventures and impressions of every day; but I have given that idea up, because the days have managed to run one into the other, and got themselves confused into a light and shady sad-coloured web, like Miss Furness's shot silk dress that she wore on Sundays—a dreadful antique thing, like rhubarb shot with magnesia; and the nasty old thing always seemed to buy her things to give herself the aspect of having been washed out, though with her dreadfully sharp features and cheese-looking hair—which she called auburn—I believe it would have been impossible to make her look nice.

Whenever there was a lecture, or a missionary meeting, or any public affair that Mrs. Blunt thought suitable, we used all to be marched off, two and two; while the teachers used to sit behind us and Mrs. Blunt before, when she would always begin conversing in a loud voice, that every one could hear in the room, before the business of the evening began—talking upon some French or German author, a translation of whose works she had read, quite aloud, for every one to hear—and hers was one of those voices that will penetrate—when people would, of course, take notice, and attention be drawn to the school. Of course there were some who could see through the artificial old thing; but for the most part they were ready to believe in her, and think her clever.

Then the Misses Pellperret's young ladies

* Quoted from Mrs. Fortesquieu de Blount's model vacation letters.

would be there too, if it was a lecture, ranged on the other side of the Town Hall. Theirs was the dissenting school—one which Mrs. Blunt would not condescend to mention; while it used to be such fun when the lecture was over, and we had waited for the principal part of the people to leave, so that the schools could go out in a compact body. Mrs. Blunt used to want us to go first, and the Misses Pellperret used to want their young ladies to go first, while neither would give way; so we used to get mixed up all together, greatly to Mrs. Blunt's disgust and our delight in both schools; for really, you know, I think it comes natural for young ladies to like to see their teachers put out of temper.

But always after one of these entertainments, as Mrs. Blunt called them—when, as a rule, the only entertainment was the fun afterwards—there used to be a lecture in Mrs. B.'s study for some one who was charged with unladylike behaviour in turning her head to look on the other side, or at the young gentlemen of the grammar school—fancy, you know, thin boys in jackets, and with big feet and hands, and a bit of fluff under their noses—big boys with squeaky, gruff, half-broken voices, who were caned and looked sheepish; and, I declare, at last there used to be so many of these lectures for looking about, that it used to make the young ladies do it, putting things into their heads that they would never have thought of before. Not that I mean to say that was the case with me, for I must confess to having been dreadfully wicked out of real spite and annoyance.

I don't know what I should have done if it had not fallen to my lot to meet with such a girl as Clara Fitzacre, who displayed such a friendly feeling towards me, making me her confidante to such an extent that I soon found out that she was most desperately—there, I cannot say what, but that a sympathy existed between her and the Italian master, Signor Fazzoletto.

"Such a divinely handsome man, dear," said Clara one night, as we lay talking in bed, with the moon streaming her rays like a silver cascade through the window; while Patty Smith played an accompaniment upon her dreadful pug-nose. And then, of course, I wanted to hear more; but I fancy Clara thought Patty was only pretending to be asleep, for she said no more that night, but the next day during lessons she asked me

to walk with her in the garden directly they were over, and of course I did, when she began again—

"Such a divinely handsome man, dear! Dark complexion and aquiline features. He is a count by rights, only he has exiled himself from Italy on account of internal troubles."

I did not believe it a bit, for I thought it more likely that he was some poor foreigner whom Mrs. Blunt had managed to engage cheaply; so when Clara spoke of internal troubles, I said, spitefully—

"Ah, that's what mamma talks about when she has the spasms and wants papa to get her the brandy. Was the signor a smuggler, and had the troubles anything to do with brandy?"

"Oh, no, dear," said Clara, innocently, "it was something about politics; but you should hear him sing 'Il balen' and 'Ah, che la morte.' It quite brings the tears into your eyes. But I am getting on with my Italian so famously."

"So it seems," I said, maliciously; "but does he know that you call him your Italian?"

"Now, don't be such a wicked old quiz," said Clara. "You know what I mean—my Italian lessons. We have nearly gone through 'I Miei Prigioni,' and it does seem so romantic. You might almost fancy he was Silvio Pellico himself. I do hope you will like him."

"No, you don't," I said, mockingly.

"I'm sure I do," said Clara; "I said *like*, didn't I?"

I was about to reply with some sharp saying, but just then I began thinking about Mr. St. Purre and his sad, patient face, and that seemed to stop me.

"But I know whom you will like," said Clara. "Just stop till some one comes—you'll see."

"And who may that be, you little goose?" I said, contemptuously.

"Monsieur Achille de Cochonet, young ladies," squeaked Miss Furness. "I hope the exercises are ready."

Clara looked at me with her handsome eyes twinkling, and then we hurried in, or rather Clara hurried me in; and we went into the class-room, when, directly after, the French master was introduced by Miss Sloman, who frowned at me, and motioned to me to keep standing. For I had risen when he entered, and then resumed my

seat; for I believe Miss Sloman took a dislike to me from the first, because I laughed upon the day when she overset the little table while performing her act of deportment.

But I thought no more of Miss Sloman just then, for I knew that Clara's eyes were upon me, and I could feel the hot blood flushing up in my cheeks and tingling in my forehead; while I knew, too—nay, I could feel, that another pair of eyes were upon me, eyes that I had seen in the railway carriage, at the station, in my dreams; and I quite shivered as Miss Sloman led me up to the front of a chair where some one was sitting, and I heard her cracked-bell voice say—

"The new pupil, Monsieur Achille, Miss Bozerne."

I could have bit my lips with anger for being so startled and taken aback before the dark foreign gentleman of whom I have before spoken.

Oh, me! sinner that I am, I cannot tell much about that dreadful afternoon. I have only some recollection of stumbling through a page of *Télémaque* in a most abominable manner, so badly that I could have cried—I, too, who would not condescend to make use of Mr. Moy Thomas as a translator, but read and revelled in "*Les Misérables*," and doated on that Don Juan of a Gilliat in "*Les Travailleurs de Mer*," though I never could quite understand how he could sit still and be drowned, for the water always seems to pop you up so when you're bathing; but, then, perhaps it is different when one is going to drown oneself. Blundering through a page of poor old *Télémaque*, after having almost worshipped that dear old Dumas, and fallen in love with Bussy, and Chicot, and Athos, and Porthos, and Aramis, and D'Artagnan, and I don't know how many more—but stop; let me see. No, I did not like Porthos of the big baldric, for he was a great booby; but as for Chicot—there, I must consider. I can't help it; I wandered then—I wandered all the time I was at Mrs. Blunt's, wandered from duty and everything. But was I not prisoned like a poor dove, and was it not likely that I should beat my breast against the bars in my efforts to escape? But there, I am safe at home once more, writing and reveling in tears—patient, penitent, and at peace; while, as I recall that afternoon, it seems one wild vision of burning eyes, till

I was walking in the garden with Clara and that stupid Patty Smith.

"Don't be afraid to talk," whispered Clara, who saw how distraite I was; "she's only a child, though she is so big."

I did not reply, but I recalled her own silence on the previous night.

"You won't tell tales, will you, Patty?" said Clara.

"No," said Patty, sleepily; "I never do, do I? But I shall, though," with a grin lighting up her fat face—"I shall, though, if you don't do the exercise for me that horrid Frenchman has left. I can't do it, and I sha'n't, and I won't, so now then."

And then the great, stupid thing made a grimace like a rude child.

It was enough to make one slap her, to hear such language; for I'm sure Monsieur de Cochonet was so quiet and gentlemanly, and—and—well, he was not handsome, but with such eyes. I can't find a word to describe them, for picturesque won't do. And then, too, he spoke such excellent English. I suppose I must have looked quite angrily at Patty, for just then Clara pinched my arm.

"I thought so," said she, laughing; "you won't make me jealous, dear, about the signor, now, will you, you dear, handsome girl? I declare I was quite frightened about you at first."

"Don't talk such nonsense," I said, though I could not help feeling flattered. "Whatever can you mean?"

"Oh, nothing at all," said Clara, laughing. "You can't know what I mean. But come and sit down here, the seat is dry now. Are not flowers sweet after the rain?"

So we went and sat down under the hawthorn; and then Clara, who had been at the Cedars two years, began to talk about Monsieur Achille, who was also a refugee, and who was obliged to stay over here on account of Louis Napoleon; and a great deal more she told me, but I could not pay much attention, for my thoughts would keep carrying me away, so that I was constantly going over the French lesson again and again, and thinking of how stupid I must have looked, and all on in that way, when it did not matter the least bit in the world; and so I kept telling myself.

"There!" exclaimed Clara, all at once; "I never did know so tiresome a girl. Isn't she, Patty, tiresome beyond all reason?"

But Patty was picking and eating the

sour gooseberries—a nasty pig!—and took not the slightest notice of the question.

"It is tiresome," said Clara again; "for I've been talking to you for the last half-hour, about what I am sure you would have liked to know, and I don't believe that you heard hardly a word; for you kept on saying 'um!' and 'ah,' and 'yes;' and now there's the tea bell ringing. But I am glad that you have come, for I did want a companion so badly. Patty is so big and so stupid; and all the other girls seem to pair off when they sleep in the same rooms. And, besides, when we are both thinking—that is, both—both—you know. There, don't look like that! How stupid of you to pretend to be so innocent, when you know all the while what I mean!"

TABLE TALK.

THE Lifeboat Institution—one of the finest philanthropic movements an island people could possess—has just been holding jubilee; for this present is the fiftieth year of its existence. May it live a thousand. As a matter of course, an annual report was read, which stated, amongst other things, that since the last report fourteen new lifeboats had been placed on the coast. During the past year the society's boats had saved the lives of 471 persons, nearly all under circumstances of peril that would have precluded any ordinary boats from venturing out to sea. Twelve silver medals, twenty-one votes of thanks inscribed on vellum, and £2,026 had been granted by the society for saving 471 lives by lifeboats, and 197 lives by fishing boats and other means. The number of lives saved from its first establishment to the present time, either by its lifeboats or by special exertions for which it had granted rewards, was 22,153. Charity never faileth, and here is an opening for those of charitable mind to lend aid to such a society as this. There is one noble individual who goes about in a modest way dropping thousand pound cheques on bankers' counters for particular objects. If these lines should meet his eye, let us tell him that such a cheque would about buy three lifeboats, ready to pluck fellow-creatures from the jaws of death. There are other noble beings, too, who give smaller sums—down even to half-crowns and shillings. Let them give them with the knowledge that that

last-named sum may be one of many that go to make a whole, whose mission will be to dare the treacherous wave in many a storm, when the half-drowned mariner is gazing through the blinding spray, looking for the help that England, above all other countries, can send.

THE *Telegraph* gives the following peculiar account of the manners and customs of Eastern money-grubbers:—"A Hindu firm in Agra are known to have buried on their premises half a million sterling. In Government securities the interest of this would amount to twenty thousand pounds a year. A native fancies that he does not derive the full satisfaction of possessing money unless he can keep it near him, so that he may occasionally feast his eyes on it. Most of the shopkeepers in the city bury their savings under some spot where they usually sit and sleep." Rather awkward when the burglars come and ask the inhabitants to sit upon the fire till they feel warm enough to tell where their treasure is hid; but by way of compensation, if the banks break, they can say, "Never mind, it don't hurt me."

THE OTHER DAY two lads, wishing to amuse themselves by using an old pump as a cannon, took a quantity of gunpowder from the railway works, where the father of one was employed, and filled their pockets with it. While entertaining themselves as described, a flash ignited the powder in one boy's pocket, and he was so fearfully burnt that he died soon afterwards. An Irish friend adds, "And so saved his life, for the pump must have burst." He did not mean it as a joke—the subject being too serious.

DO YOU EVER play at pool? Taking it for granted that you do occasionally join in the merry billiard game, we may ask whether you have not often sat down somewhat disconsolately upon losing your third and last life, knowing that no star could shed its lustre upon your fate? Here is the wish of a player, muttered from an adjacent seat: "Oh! that I were a cat, for then should I have nine lives!"

All Contributions are attentively considered, and unaccepted MSS. are returned on receipt of stamps for postage; but the Editor cannot hold himself responsible for any accidental loss. No unaccepted MSS. will be returned until a written application has been made for them.

ONCE A WEEK

NEW SERIES.

No. 329.

April 18, 1874.

Price 2d.

JACK'S SISTER; OR, WOMANLY PAST QUESTION.

CHAPTER XXIV.
CUT DOWN LIKE THE GRASS.



HILE Enid was settling her fate for life, with Merle for guide, and her mother's grave for advocate, Mr. Leyburn and Jack had ridden out from town, and were slowly trotting along

the breezy hills, across which the railway ran, and over whose mantle of purple and gold the bees kept up a ceaseless humming.

Jack had been impatient for the ride; impatient to get outside the town, forget his cousin's affairs—which had occupied the general attention too long already—and confide his own engagement to his father's ears. Mr. Leyburn guessed, had indeed guessed and staved it off all the week; and would have liked to stave it off still longer, even at the cost of more money difficulties with Merle. He had only just got his son to himself again, and did not want to give him up to any one. Couldn't the young fool have been content to take care of his own heart for a year or two? And who knew what sort of creature might have captured it? The father felt slightly cross; and, far from offering any assistance to the topic, tried to

defer it by talking persistently of home and foreign politics, bank tactics, crops, &c., all equally displeasing to poor Jack at that moment.

"You must see that this Government is nothing more than a heap of fools—fools and swindlers, Jack," he cried out, winding up a tirade on certain local abuses by a quite uncalled-for cut on the flanks of his staunch old grey. "Steady, Bess! will you, girl, will you, eh? A pack of weak, mean fools, sir; selling the nation's honour, like modern Judases, for a miserable handful of silver—a wretched saving of a wretched sum which they won't get in the end. Now, in respect to— I say, Jack, who's this woman charity-bobbing? Mercy Brent, eh? Good day, Mrs. Brent. And what are you doing over here? Coming from your parish! Why, I thought Brent had got regular work, and you were doing finely."

Mrs. Brent 'bobbied' again, and numbled something in a dolorous whine about "Sammy being sick, an' the man out on strike wi' Farmer Gurton's hands;" then, catching sight of unsympathetic anger in the banker, to whom the word "strike" acted much as a red rag on a bull, executed yet a third bob, and trudged on her way—her tall, shabby figure making a black smear in the golden autumn haze as it slowly wound along the steep hill paths leading down to the valley.

"Strike, indeed!" exclaimed Mr. Leyburn, irefully, "that's the general cry this year—'Out on strike;' and here's winter at our doors, and coals going up; and who is to feed those drones when the snow comes, I should like to know?"

"We," said Jack. "We always have; and they know it. Father, I want to speak to you."

"I thought you were speaking, son."

"Yes; but on another subject, and a more serious one—to me."

"Bless my heart, Jack, I should think we had had serious enough subjects of late;

not but what you'll find rise of coals and strikes of fools uncommonly serious to you before you're as old as I am. Wait till you've the cares of a family on your head, and you won't look on strikes as nothing."

"I don't now, sir; and it is just with regard to these family cares that I want to talk to you."

Mr. Leyburn saw it was not to be staved off; and having a constitutional dislike to being beaten on any point, took refuge in a shield of sarcasm.

"Humph! you're uncommonly far-sighted, Jack; but, on the whole, we may as well defer the cares of *your* family—ha! ha! ha!—till it comes, eh?"

Jack would not respond to the laugh.

"Well, no, father; when a thing may come any day, it's as well to prepare for it beforehand. You've taught me that in business, and I take it the same applies to private life—don't you?"

"My dear boy, don't ask me. The sucking babies of this generation know so much better than us old fellows, that I never venture to offer an opinion on any subject outside the bank."

Jack bit his lips, and kept his temper.

"Father," said he, plump and plain, "I want to get married."

"Want what? Married, eh? Well, Jack, some men think wives rather troublesome and very expensive toys; but I don't see why you shouldn't indulge yourself with one in the course of the next ten years."

"I should be sorry to wait as long as that, sir."

"When you have waited, you'll wish it had been longer."

"I hope not, father. At any rate, I'd rather take your experience than your opinion on the subject."

"My dear Jack, in the matter of love fooleries I am aware that my opinion is worth nothing. You are the best judge. Is the day settled, and who is the girl?—not that I've any right to ask, though."

"The *lady*, sir," said Jack, swelling with some natural indignation at finding his passion treated in this cavalier fashion, "is Miss Baby—Barbara, I mean—Delamayne; and her father is the vicar of Hollingwood, near St. Leonard's. I made her acquaintance while I was staying there this autumn."

"Ah, indeed! A week's visit, I think. Quick work rather; but scarce breeched fools and clever girls—eh, Jack?"

"Have what opinion you like of my folly, sir," Jack broke in, flushing hotly; "but be so kind as not to speak disrespectfully of this young lady. What can I have done that you should speak to me in this way? I come to you, not only as my father, but my best friend, to tell you that I have won the affection of an amiable girl, and wish to make her my wife; and you meet me with taunts and sneers. It isn't fair, father; and I don't deserve it."

Mr. Leyburn was touched; not, however, being willing to avow as much, he contented himself with scolding Bess, and blowing his nose, before resuming, in a grumbling tone—

"Coming to me isn't much good when a thing is settled, Jack. Perhaps, if you consider the subject dispassionately, you might ask yourself what have I done that my only son, who **most assuredly has never** met with harshness or reserve from me, should not only throw himself into the arms of the first girl he meets, but keep his folly to himself; and **never breathe a word** of girl, attachment, or marriage, at home, till the whole affair's settled, and the young couple only waiting to see whether the old nest will be cleared out for them, or a new one fitted up. Hang it, Jack, **I don't deserve** it, if you like; and what's more, **I can't pretend not to feel it!**"

And the banker blew his nose violently, and rode on, though slowly, so that his son might have an opportunity for vehemently disclaiming the imputation, and reasserting his filial affection.

Jack disappointed him. He said nothing at first; only cantered on, looking at his horse's ears, and weighing what his father had said. When he had viewed it calmly and dispassionately from both sides, and not till then, the young man spoke, but very quietly and deliberately—

"I had not thought of it in that way; and putting myself in your place, I dare say I should have been vexed also. I am very sorry, father."

"Sorrow won't mend broken bones," growled Mr. Leyburn—not angrily, though, now—"nor yet get a man out of a mess which his folly has jumped him into."

"I'm in no mess, father. I've asked a good little girl to marry me, and if you and her father consent I shall think I'm a very lucky fellow; for, of course, a wife is a serious charge, and, as he says, I'm very

young, and mayn't know how to manage it. I don't know *much* about girls," Jack went on, meditatively; "only there's Enid, you see. She and I always get on very well together; and she could look after and amuse Baby sometimes while I am at the bank. Of course, for the child's sake, as well as my own, I couldn't neglect my work then, and——"

"The child!—Baby!" stammered Mr. Leyburn, quite confounded at this new combination.

"Yes," said Jack, coolly, "that is her name—what they call her, at least. Barbara is the full name, but they think Baby prettier; and she's such a little, childish thing, it doesn't sound so stupid as you would imagine. I suppose she must be called Barbara when she's married," in an inquiring tone. "Nicknames don't sit well on married women, do they? And what does it matter whether your Christian name's pretty or not? Barbara's a very decent name—as good as any other, I think."

Mr. Leyburn made no reply. Jack's common sense mode of viewing the whole matter quite flabbergasted his senior, who had had his little romance long ago, and still held it sacred.

"As to telling you about it before speaking to her," the young man went on, "of course I should have done, and talked it all over with you; only when I went down there last time I had no thought of marrying her or any one; and though I thought a good deal about her as a nice little thing, I didn't think it was in that way."

"Other people did," remarked Mr. Leyburn. "Why, even Enid saw you were head over ears in love with some one."

This was an exaggeration; but Jack took it, like all else, *au pied de la lettre*, and puzzled over it.

"Did she really? Well, she was cleverer than I. Besides, I've always considered it very unfair to go talking a girl over, and discussing her, before you know whether she'll have you, or even whether you want her. I wouldn't thank any fellow who went about asking every one whether Enid would be a good wife for him, when probably she wouldn't touch him with a pair of tongs."

"Miss Dela—what is it?—the Baby consented to dispense with the tongs, I assume," said Mr. Leyburn, mildly.

But Jack paid no manner of attention to the ribald jest, and went smoothly on with

his history. I wonder, reader, how it would have sounded told by Baby Delamayne, and then by you or me. The three versions would have looked agreeably different. Jack spoke of a little creature, so innocent and merry as to be out of place among her fine lady sisters—a little creature who did not know what coquetry or affectation meant, but who had clung to him with simple, cordial liking from the first, till unconsciously he grew to make her first in his love and care. Parting, or rather the eve of parting, brought the secret out. She looked so sorry that somehow he felt he must come back for her, and said something, he didn't remember what—at any rate, she wasn't angry; and, in fact, that settled it.

"I wish you had spoken to me before you did settle it, so that at least I might have satisfied myself whether the fate you had chosen was a good one for you," Mr. Leyburn said, in a tone of kindly, anxious seriousness.

Jack's last few sentences had let in a light on the warmth hidden in that honest heart, and convinced his father that Baby Delamayne was something more than "a young man's fancy." He looked up now in some surprise.

"Why, father, you forget! Directly I had won her to own she liked me, I was bound to her. I might have told you before going to her father, certainly; but that would have put her in rather a false position towards her people. A woman has no business to have any secrets from her family—and a child like Baby, too! No, no; her father had welcomed me to his house, and trusted her in my care. I owed it him to tell him at once how I felt and how I was situated."

"Hum! Well, what did he say?"

"Oh, he was very kind. Would not give his consent till I had got yours; but said he had no personal objection to me."

"I should think not," said Mr. Leyburn, drily. "Well, I can't blame you. You've acted uprightly, and like a gentleman; but I do wish I knew something of this young lady and her family. Of course, a man in love never thinks of anything but the romantic side of the matter."

"Never *thinks*, sir!" cried Jack, despairingly. "Why, I wouldn't think so much of anything again for a good round sum. 'In love!' Well, father, I did think you knew me well enough to feel sure that I *couldn't* love any woman who wasn't in position—as

well as in herself—fully fitted to sit at Enid's side and carry my mother's name. You married a clergyman's daughter, sir; I don't want to do better."

Mr. Leyburn stretched out his hand, and turned his face away, with something between a laugh and a sob.

"Jack, you're a lump of insufferable, self-opinionated conceit; but—but God bless you, my boy, and give you the happiness I had. I can't wish you more. Now tell me something of what you purpose doing."

Jack grasped his father's hand tight and firm.

"Thank you, sir," was all he said at first. But after a moment he began to speak of the rectory, Mrs. Delamayne's connection with the aristocracy, and the widowed daughter who had married a son of the Earl of Ultramontane. "They are grander people than we are," said Jack, "and seem to have no end of swell friends. But there won't be any money; her father said so—that he had nothing to give his girls but a chest full of clothes, and a hundred pounds or so in their pockets, until he died. There would be something then, but not much; and he dared say my people would expect more. I told him my people would expect me to earn money for my wife, not to live on hers."

"You will have to wait, though, Jack," said his father. He was quite resigned and good-humoured now. "I can't have you taking your money out of the bank, to set up a second establishment, just now, when your college expenses are hardly over, and Merle still such a drag on me. It would not be right to Enid."

"Certainly not," Jack answered, readily. "I never thought of marrying under a year or so, at least. Baby is very young, you know; and I should like her to know you and Enid well, and get comfortably into our ways before I— Take care, sir! What's that?"

They had been riding easily along a narrow path which skirted the hillside—Mr. Leyburn a little in front, and both too busy in conversation to heed where they were going—when Jack cried out.

Just too late!

Simultaneous with his words, and drowning them in uproar, came a loud shriek, a rush, a roar, a long, echoing rattle, and the express train for London had dashed past within three yards of them, and going at

the rate of forty miles an hour; while Brown Bess, after one frantic shy from the approach of the fiery monster, reared up on end, threw her rider, and galloped, half wild with terror, in the opposite direction. It all happened in one moment, before Mr. Leyburn had time to tighten hands or knees; and Jack, whose horse was plunging also, never paused to look back, but calling out—"Never mind, father, I'll have her back in a moment"—set his spurs into the refractory beast, and galloped after the runaway.

He did not go far, not a couple of hundred yards; but what availed the distance, when the minute occupied in traversing it might be purchased by a lifetime of remorse? Oh, moments, so short, so fleeting, what would many a dying man give for one of you!—many a living sinner to blot out the memory of another! Was it instinct—that mysterious messenger from another world—or only the sudden silence which fell on that sunny hillside after the passage of the train, which made the hoof-strokes of Jack's horse sound so strangely loud and deep, almost like the tolling of a funeral bell on its rider's ears?

In a sudden, unexplained agony of alarm, he reined in the swift creature with a jerk which brought it, foam-flecked and quivering, on its haunches; and, turning in the saddle, looked back to where he had left his father.

There was no one in sight.

Sickening with unconfessed horror, he shaded his eyes with his hand, and stared again along the quiet, sunshiny slope, as half-hoping to see the stalwart figure seated on a bank in waiting for his return.

It was not there! In all that breezy expanse of hilltop there was no sign of any human being save himself—nothing but the tufts of yellow gorse; here and there a jutting rock breaking the line of pathway; and—good God! No, it couldn't be! But what was *that*—that small black heap lying so still, so motionless, among the stones and furze bushes at the side of the road?

In one second Jack had turned his horse, and was back, out of the saddle, and kneeling at the side of the prone figure; its clothes torn and whitened with dust; its face white, still, and staring with awful eyes, blank and unseeing, into the pale blue vault of Heaven.

"Father!" said Jack. He did not speak aloud; some yet unuttered terror seemed to

freeze his voice. "Father, try to speak to me! Are you much hurt?"

No answer. - Never a word from the parted, livid lips. Jack put one hand under the head to raise it, but drew it away again with an irrepressible cry of horror; and dropped back upon his knees, sick and trembling all over. That proud old head, with its grey hairs fast bleaching white—it was pillowed, all too firmly now, on a sharp lump of flint, which had cut clean through skull and brain in that crashing fall; and Jack's right hand was crimsoned with the life-blood slowly soaking away, and making red channels for itself among the dry, sandy soil.

Death must have been instantaneous.

Mr. Leyburn had spoken his last words in this world; and Jack knelt among the furze bushes, rubbing the stiffened, wrinkled hands between his strong young palms, and crying like a child—crying for the first time since his childhood.

"Oh, father! dear old dad—don't say it's all over! Father, not so soon—not for ever!"

Vain cry! uttered how vainly by many and many an orphaned voice in that first great anguish of sorrow; echoing and re-echoing in pitiful, hopeless pleading beneath the deaf and silent heavens.

Leyburn and Son had become an empty name; and the son knew it, even as he knelt there, sobbing aloud in the full strength of his youthful manhood, while his father lay cold and still in the dust beneath him.

"There is a reaper whose name is Death;
And, with his sickle keen,
He reaps the bearded grain at a breath,
And the flowers that grow between."

It was the "bearded grain" that had fallen now—cut down in one moment under the pleasant autumn sunshine. While life was strong in every pulse, and "all the world spoke well of him," Death had beckoned with his icy hand; and John Leyburn rose up and went.

Jack did not sit there long. It was his nature to *do*, more than to think; and, after the first few minutes of weakness, he stood up and shouted to a distant labourer to come and help him carry the body to the railway station hard by, before he went back to break the terrible news to those at home.

I pass briefly over the time that followed. Jack was still busy upstairs over the hard, necessary duties of the moment, when Enid

came in; and then, as we have seen, it was Merle, not he, who took the comforter's part.

Merle's presence and help were, indeed, invaluable in these days of trouble. Jack's own great suffering made him shrink from every unnecessary word or look which touched upon the new wound; besides which, he was working himself to death to arrange everything at home and in the bank, so that others should not be worried.

Aunt Jane seemed utterly prostrated by the shock, which had left her standing alone, in her old age, among a younger generation; and poor Enid, trying to do her little daily duties, nurse her aunt, and not give way before Jack, found Merle's patient tenderness, and ready, helping aid wonderfully sweet in those sad days when all seemed drawn together by a common bond of sorrow.

There was no talk of his going back to Oxford now. He was too much needed, both by Jack and Enid, to be spared till after Christmas; and perhaps it was the close link of sympathy between all the members of the bereaved family which caused both the Leyburns' engagements to seem less terrible and astounding events than at other times either must have appeared. The great centre grief dulled other impressions, and so confused ordinary facts that no one could remember how either event came to be announced. True, Merle started once, and looked inquiringly at the others when Jack alluded to some alteration which could stand over "till Baby came;" and Enid had to whisper to him that—"Oh! yes, it was all settled with dear, dear papa just before—"; and Aunt Jane was confident that *she* had never heard anything of Merle's successful "coup" till Enid apologized for some interference from her cousin, by the reminder—

"But I am to be Merle's wife some day, auntie; so, after all, it is only his right to direct me."

Then, indeed—for the funeral was over by that time, and all had settled back into a melancholy assumption of the old routine—both Miss Leyburn and Jack found leisure to be indignant and aggrieved at the audacity of such an idea on Merle's part; declaimed bitterly of his taking such an advantage of Enid's affection; and declared that it was not only the most cruel folly in the world for her, but that it could not possibly be allowed on any consideration.

Even these opinions, however, reached Merle in a form which was softened by a sense of the manner in which he had shared their common loss; and when referred to Enid by her lover, were upset by the girl's mild but steady decision. Merle had not entrapped her into a promise. She had given it of her own free will, and she was no child. He loved her, and she him. Her mother had never wished them to be parted; and had her father lived, she was sure he would have respected that wish. At any rate, she alone was to blame; and she had given her word, and could go back from it as little as Jack from his.

This rather silenced Jack, who had been nettled on the subject of his own betrothal by a repeated series of comments and cross-questionings from Aunt Jane, who had set her heart on his marrying Amy Northcote—a girl who had grown up pretty well under her own eye, and would have five thousand pounds down on her wedding morning. He shrugged his shoulders, and told Enid he shouldn't interfere. He certainly didn't approve of her marrying a man who had only her money to live on, or waiting years till he had earned something to keep himself; and Enid kissed him, and answered that she had decided. Her mother thought her necessary to Merle's happiness, and that was enough sanction for her.

Merle, too, took stand on Mrs. Leyburn's love for him; but, indeed, he said very little on the subject to any one, leaving Enid to fight his battles; and merely showing that, if he had erred in pressing the engagement, he was content that it should be as long as the family decided—that is, until he had a tolerably comfortable home to offer his wife.

"I know I'm deucedly poor," he told Jack, whose strong, if tacit, disapprobation annoyed him more than all Miss Leyburn's anger; "and if I had not loved Enid all my life, I could not have borne to accept the humiliating position outsiders will choose to put me in. What I can do, however, I will—settle on her all I have, including the £500 left me in your father's will, and insure my life for her benefit. For the rest, I can only work on; and as to her money, tie it up as you like. If she is willing to give me herself—of which I know I am not worthy—her fortune is a matter of very little moment. Should you refuse to marry Miss Delamayne if any one left her six hundred a-year?"

Jack grunted, and made small reply; but that evening he told Enid there was some "sense of business" in Merle. She was a great fool; but if she enjoyed waiting, like a widow bewitched, he couldn't help it. He supposed the fellow would get a tolerable curacy some time; and then, if she liked to risk it, why she must.

THE CASUAL OBSERVER.

AMONGST THE SPIRITS.

YOUR Observer has been silent concerning his investigations, but not inactive. He has been, so to speak, busy with the still, even though he is still with the busy. The still he alludes to is, so to speak, the illicit still of the spirits; and he is now full of spirits—in a state of literary inebriation—inasmuch as he has been dealing largely with proof spirits, and spirits that are above proof.

Here is what he has done. Aiming slowly and with care at hitting the light, he has plunged into darkness; for seeing that it might be as well to examine what had been done before going further, he determined to be present at two sêances—the one of avowed spiritualism, the other of the disavowed—of the exposers of what they denominated a sham.

He went, then, one evening to a house which shall be nameless—the private house of a gentleman of well-known name, and joined the company awaiting the arrival of a medium—a gentleman imbued with great powers, and who had been engaged for a series of sêances; and who at length came.

The ladies of the party gave a shiver that was composed of equal parts of anticipation, excitement, and fright. They indulged in a second shiver when, after a good deal of mat friction, umbrella-stand rattling, and the knocking down of two or three hats from the pegs, the gentleman in black entered the room, bowing solemnly to all in turn, keeping his small eyes half-closed the while; but, at the same time, apparently carefully investigating everything and everybody with the greatest of zeal.

He was a lank, serious individual, whose liver apparently did not do its duty properly, and left him with a certain amount of inutilised bile diffused yellowly in his system, and coming a great deal more to the surface than was proper in an individual

not suffering from jaundice. His hair was, an American would say, "too much," spoiling greatly the collar of his coat, and setting the Observer's fingers itching for five minutes' good use of a pair of scissors, without hindrance or let. His whiskers were not; his moustache was closely shaven; and his chin was adorned—this word is used, of course, subject to opinion—with a small portion of straight black hair of a separate nature—that is to say, it was thinly sown: forty-seven, or at the most forty-nine, hairs would have been the total of his beard.

This was the medium. I will say no more about his looks, lest the temptation prove too strong, and the whole of this article be taken up with remarks upon his umbonate face, his boots, the cut of his garb, and his hands.

I cannot help it. I must say a few words about those hands. Bell, is it not, who has written about the character in the hand? Bell should have seen these long, broad, bony hands, that always looked moist where the joints swelled out so largely, which were painfully impressive in the appearance of the long nails and their surroundings, while the way in which his broad thumbs bent back whispered of an activity that might be peculiarly applied. There was certainly character in his hands. From them you could judge the whole man: he held his character in his hands, and from it you would have said that he was a being with a most wholesome distaste of soap.

In a strange, unctuous voice, wherein was an absence, sometimes marked, of the language used in polished society, he laid down the laws for our proceedings, telling us that, for the time being, he would be entirely in the hands of the spirits who might come, though he could not answer for it; that the door must be fastened, and every ray of light from candle, gas, fire, or the parting day, religiously excluded. And, above all things, he warned us, with a solemnity befitting the occasion, that if any person struck a light when the spirits were in the room, it might cause the death of the medium.

This announcement completely took the wind out of the sails of anybody who might have felt disposed to satisfy his longing eyes, and the proceedings went on. An accordion, a handbell, a couple of paper trumpets formed by rolling up two songs, and a toy tambourine were laid ready on the table; we all took our seats round it, and every

ray of light was excluded save that given by one burner in the gaselier; and the master of the house stood up, ready at the order of the medium to turn that off.

As to the table, that was an ordinary mahogany dining table, round which we sat, hands joined to hands; the visitors on either side of the medium holding his hands fast. Then the order was given, the gas was turned off, the master sat hastily down, and the séance proper began.

You will acknowledge, perhaps, that to sit in total darkness is rather peculiar. The air seems filled with strange objects dancing before the retina, and a disposition to flinch pervades the being. The darkness here was intense; and each person, on the impulse of showing that he or she did not mind it at all, began directly to talk in a rather forced way, the consequence being that several remarks made were of the class that may be termed inane.

Now rose the voice of the medium, telling us that the spirits rather approved of singing, and suggesting that we should try some song or hymn; the consequence being that the Canadian boat song was offered up a cruel sacrifice upon that mahogany table, to such an extent as regards time, tune, and words, that its own father would never have recognised his son.

Then we had a little more darkness, unbroken save by a desire on the part of one or two individuals to wipe their noses; after which there was more irrelevant conversation; and lastly, an announcement from some one that the spirits were at hand, for a sensation as of a cold wind could be felt blowing over the hands; and then—yes, undoubtedly there was a feeling as of a draught from an open door; and directly after, it might have been at the same moment, a numbing, tingling, pins and needles sensation running up the arms, for all the world as if one was being mildly galvanised.

There was another pause, followed by the rustling of the paper tubes about the table; and, as far as one could judge, they rolled and moved about, rose up, fell down, and then, apparently gathering strength, floated or were carried up and patted the heads of first one and then another of the seated party, provoking faint ejaculations of alarm from the ladies and mocking remarks from the stronger sex, such as "Take care there!" "Hallo!" "Mind what you're about!" and the like—uttered, though, your Observer

(listener here) is bound to confess, in a tone that was not remarkable for its strength.

This ceased, and then came sounds as of some one busy at the mantelpiece, moving the vases about, pushing the heavy marble clock along, and rattling the smaller objects in a most peculiar way for about five minutes, when there was silence once more; and the medium suggested more singing.

This was achieved, being here the practice of enchantment, in its true acceptance, with a vengeance; and apparently it did call down spirits by singing, for on the instant of finishing, up rose the bell from the table, ringing violently, and floated right away in the air, moving about, and plainly emitting crackling sparks, like the faint discharges sometimes seen in an electrical experiment. This, too, ceased after a time; and then there came upon the table a loud bang, followed by silence as intense as the darkness by which we were surrounded.

Here the voice of the medium was heard, a light was struck, and the gas soon shed pleasant rays upon several rather blanched faces—dazzled, too, by the sudden change; while right in the middle of the table—having evidently been lifted over the heads of the company, and placed right beneath the gaselier, where there was just room for it to stand—was a great embroidery framed screen, which stood on four feet, something after the fashion of a towel-horse, but massive and of carved walnut.

It was the work of the spirits, the medium said; and he announced the séance as at an end, bade us farewell, and departed—when, of course, discussion followed. The host and a lady declared that they held the medium's hands tightly the whole time, and they were evidently sincere; while the members of the meeting formed themselves into sides—the sceptics and the believers.

Now, your Observer has set down nothing here but the simple truth concerning that which took place. His own conviction is that the medium did not leave his seat, neither did he have his hands at liberty; and, moreover, he had no apparatus. If it was juggling, it was clever in the extreme; if it was not jugglery, it was certainly puzzling. And there were peculiarities deserving of mark: the cold wind across the hands; the tingling sensation in the arms; the rising of the bell, and its emission of sparks.

Once more let your Observer tell you that

he was keenly on the alert for signs of collusion and trickery, but none seemed forthcoming; and, moreover, let him repeat that this was not a séance in a spiritualist's house, but in that of a private gentleman seeking scientifically after the truth, ready to discard the mummery, and seize upon the genuine. So far, your Observer is puzzled. He is not ready to believe in the present theories upon the subject, but he is puzzled; and to see what they could show him, he visited the entertainment of Messrs. Maskelyne and Cooke, who now offer to show the same things encountered in a light or dark-séance, avowedly by trickery. Here, then, is what he saw.

It is not necessary that he should allude to the first parts of the entertainment, which are very good and well worth seeing, but do not bear specially upon the question in hand—the exposures of the trickery of spiritualism. This part of the entertainment, then, commenced with what was termed a light séance, in which was shown a variety of tricks connected with a large cabinet, which opens with folding doors and stands upon turned legs, having something the appearance of a turn-up bedstead of a superior type.

It must be premised that, though the entertainers profess to give the same tricks as are performed by the spiritual mediums, they do not profess to show the *modus operandi*.

The entertainers then invite gentlemen from the audience upon the stage, to examine the cabinet, which is done, and nothing is revealed. The structure is apparently quite empty, the folding doors opening from top to bottom, and exposing the whole. Then the entertainers are securely bound hand and foot, after seating themselves one opposite to the other; and, after the fashion of the manifestations of the Davenport Brothers, a guitar, hand-bells, tambourines, a speaking trumpet, and a couple of cornopeans are placed inside. The doors are closed, and immediately hands are waved from a couple of holes in the front, the guitar is thrummed, the tambourines are beaten, the bells ring furiously—one being even tossed out; and, amidst peals of derisive laughter and hoarse noises sent through the speaking trumpet, a rough duet is blown upon the cornets. Silence ensues, the doors are thrown open, and the entertainers are found bound hand and foot, the cords and their knots untouched.

This and similar tricks follow ; and then a stranger from the audience—undoubtedly a visitor, free from all confederation—goes into the cabinet, where the two bound men already sit. He submits to having his own hands tied and his eyes blindfolded. Then the tambourines and other instruments are placed in his lap, and the doors are closed.

Directly after the din begins, spirit hands appear from the openings, the bells ring, the tambourines beat; and on the noise ceasing and the doors being opened, the visitor is found with the instruments taken away, and one of them broken over his head, to hang round his neck like a collar.

Then the lights are turned off, but not until one of the tambourines has been rubbed with phosphorus. Intense darkness ensues, in the midst of which the tambourine, emitting a wavering, will-o'-the-wispish light, is seen to rise from the stage and flutter up like a bird, floating here and there in the most inconsequent manner, and right away over the audience, amongst whom it at length gently alights, somewhere about the same time as the guitar, which has also been endued with volatility.

While this is going on there is a sensation as of some light objects falling, striking the head and face, and which feel like flowers. A light is partly turned on from a dark lantern, and a cloudy-looking body is seen flitting about; after which the lights are turned up; and after a few more tricks à la Davenport, the séance is at an end.

The floating about of the tambourine is certainly the most striking part, and is most ingeniously managed. But as these are all avowedly tricks, no more need be said than that your Observer has recorded faithfully all that he has seen and heard at both séances, refraining for the present to give opinions, leaving the comparison and judgment here to the reader, who must go with mind unbiased, and have not the slightest objection to being in the dark.

ONLY A YEAR.

CHAPTER VII.

"I HAVE SUCH A LOT OF THINGS TO DO."

IT seemed that Mr. Hasson Grainger made up his mind it should be peace, for during the following days he renewed his old intimacy at the Manor House, in spite of small encouragement from Gilfred, who was not fond of him.

Gilfred and Phillis rode over one day to Merresford, and made a formal call. Mrs. Kyriel was too great an invalid to go anywhere. Mr. Thyrlé was out, but they were admitted to the presence of Miss Mason, who insisted on regaling them on cake and wine in as large proportions as possible, and entertained them with minute descriptions of the faults and failings of "him," as she usually designated her nephew.

"What an odious, vulgar, old hag!" was Gilfred's comment as they rode away. "If this Thyrlé had the faintest perception of civilization, he could not endure that old wretch to live with."

Phillis laughed at Gilfred's face of disgust.

"He says she is the only relative he has."

"Most providential circumstance for him, if the others were anything like her."

Phillis was disappointed not to have seen Thyrlé—she so wished Gilfred to know him, that he might say a word to Sir George Rose in his favour. The Roses were the great folks of the neighbourhood. If Sir George Rose asked Mr. Thyrlé once to dine at Hersley, the rest of the magnates thereabouts would obediently follow his lead. She could easily have persuaded the old gentleman herself, and would have done so a few days ago; but that speech of Grainger's on the subject of congratulation had made her rather shy of the subject. She was more provoked than ever when they met Sir George Rose riding out at the great gates of Hersley Towers, and still more when he began to talk on the very subject on which she was regretting that Gilfred was uninformed.

"We have been talking over with the Langholmes and the Ashleys," he said, "about calling on the Scotch people who have bought Merresford. The accounts I have heard of them differ so strangely. Rochfort, our parson, has called, of course, and saw the lady—the wife or mother is she?—and said she was simply intolerable; then young George Dyers has been staying with us lately, and said he talked a good deal to Mr. Thyrlé himself at the meet the other day, and he thought him a very nice fellow indeed. I don't know on which account to rely; and it would be very awkward to know them if they are the snobs some people say they are, as they live so near us. I have noticed the young man in the field each day; he is very well mounted, and

rides uncommonly straight, but I don't know that one can go much by that."

"Well, Phil can enlighten you better than I can," said Gilfred.

So Phillis gave Sir George a short sketch of her adventure, her sojourn at Merresford, and her opinion of the inmates; though she was much more guarded respecting Mr. Thyrlé than she had been to Grainger.

"And you have called, you say?" asked Sir George, doubtfully.

"We have just performed that feat," responded Gilfred.

"And the mother, you say, is very vulgar?"

"The aunt, Sir George," corrected Phillis. "Yes, I don't like her."

They were just entering Hallingford, and Phillis descried Mr. Thyrlé riding leisurely out of the town on John Peel. He was passing them, having replied to her smile by the customary obeisance, but she spoke to him.

"Mr. Thyrlé—we have just been calling at your house. Let me introduce my brother."

While Gilfred expressed his regret that he had found Mr. Thyrlé absent, Sir George said a couple of words in Miss Kyriel's ear.

"Mr. Thyrlé!" she exclaimed, "Sir George Rose wishes to know you. Mr. Thyrlé—Sir George Rose."

And by those magic words Phillis knew that Thyrlé would be admitted among the *crème de la crème* of Knollinghamshire society. A few minutes' talk, and Thyrlé rode on.

"Seems a very gentlemanlike young fellow," was Sir George's comment.

Gilfred agreed, and Phillis maintained a discreet silence.

A few days after this, the hounds met two or three miles from Hallingford, and Phillis, her brother, and Brooke were present, together with Grace and Hasson Grainger. Phillis was mounted on her favourite—Dickie—again, he having quite recovered. She soon saw Thyrlé, and fancied he was approaching their party; but on turning presently to see if he was coming, he was nowhere in sight.

It was a lovely day, and there was a good run; but Phillis felt rather vexed and discontented, she scarce knew why. Thyrlé had never reappeared, so she fancied something must have gone wrong with his horse.

A few days later, Phillis was dressing to

go to a dinner party at Hensley Towers. All the young people at the Manor House were invited, and Phillis knew that the Graingers were going too.

Would Mr. Thyrlé be there?

She fancied he would; and, whether from that cause or some other, she took unusual pains to look beautiful. She tried the effect of half a dozen styles of dressing her hair. She twined pearls in her dark locks; she tried on a regal diamond tiara of her mother's; she put in scarlet flowers, white flowers, pink flowers, and took them out again. Her hair and her temper both were a good deal ruffled; she shook out the former, and rearranged it. Then she ordered her maid to bring her a handful of fine snowdrops, and in five minutes more the star-like little flowers were disposed to her complete satisfaction, gleaming out of the folds of her dark, silky hair.

"It is too young a style for me," she thought, looking at herself in her cheval glass. "A white dress and real snowdrops! Almost childish; but it suits me, and that is what I care for to-night."

It did suit her. A delicate, unwonted colour was in her cheeks; and a light, which made her eyes glorious, shone from their darkness as she entered the great drawing-room at Hensley on her brother's arm. He felt proud of her, but also a little pained at heart—thinking that the certainty of meeting Hasson Grainger had called up this more than usual beauty. Blooming little Kittie followed blissfully with Mr. Brooke, and passed almost unremarked under the brilliancy of her sister's charms. A single glance told Phillis that Thyrlé was there, and that the Graingers had not yet arrived.

Phillis was a great favourite with Lady Rose and Sir George, and at Hensley was accorded a privilege not often allowed to young ladies at dinner parties—namely, the choice of her escort.

"Pretty as ever, my dear," said the old lady, as Phillis took a seat near her. "I don't ever mind telling you that; for you are never conceited, whatever other faults you may have."

"Don't be too sure, Lady Rose. If you knew how long I was in dressing my hair to-night (I never can bear to have a maid do it), you would say I was one of the vainest girls you ever saw."

"It has not been time thrown away," was the reply. "But tell me, Phillis, which of

the young men shall take you in to dinner? Your old friend, Hasson Grainger, will be here—not him? Well, I know you think young Lord Ashley stupid, and I suppose you don't care for the curate? Then, that good-looking friend of your brother's, Mr. Brooke?"

But Phillis shook her head to them all.

"There is only this Mr. Thyrlé left," and Lady Rose lowered her tone. "I fear he is a terrible parvenu. We saw his aunt when we called at Merresford; and, oh! I cannot be thankful enough that she won't go out in the evening."

"Is he the only one left for me?" asked Phillis, with well-affected carelessness.

"The only unmarried man. But you surely would rather have Hasson Grainger—handsome Hasson?"

"No; I will try this Mr. Thyrlé—he rather amused me the other day. I have met him before."

"Oh, to be sure—George was telling me."

And she forthwith summoned "George," and gave him his instructions.

In a minute or two, Mr. Thyrlé made his way to Miss Kyriel's side. She shook hands with him.

"My aunt has been suffering from influenza," he said, "or she would have done herself the pleasure of returning your call. I hope to ride over to Merresford to-morrow afternoon. Is there any chance of finding you at home?"

"My brother is rather uncertain," answered Phillis, evasively; "but, if you like, I will tell him you mean to come."

"Pray don't keep him at home on my account; he will hardly thank me for going if you do."

Phillis was silent, rapidly concocting a plan for the morrow.

"You were not out with us this morning," he recommenced. "We had no run, so it was not much loss."

"The meet was rather far from us. It was at High Refton toll-bar, I think?"

"Yes," and he smiled. "I should know my way better if you would lose yourself there again."

"Why did you not hunt on Wednesday?"

"I went to the meet."

"That was not what I asked."

Before he could frame any reply, "Mr. Hasson Grainger and Miss Grainger" were announced.

Phillis, watching Thyrlé with some curiosity, saw an evil light—that of passionate hatred—come into his eyes, and a shadow of great trouble fall on his face.

"Did your horse get into trouble?" persisted Phillis.

"Oh, no." He spoke in a low voice, scarcely so steady as it had been. "But I saw Mr. Grainger there; and, as I told you, I don't like him or wish to meet him, so I went home."

"I hope you don't meditate going home now?"

For he looked harassed and uneasy.

"I would hardly be willing to forego your society to escape even his."

"That was exactly what you did the other day."

"Pardon me. I was not in your society then, and doubtful of my welcome if I sought it."

A reproachful glance was the only answer—a glance so reproachful that a decided quickening of Thyrlé's pulse was the immediate result.

Kittie Kyriel fell to the share of Hasson Grainger; but he made up for this by securing a seat on one side of Phillis, and by devoting himself to her in a way which attracted notice from others than were intended by him to observe it.

Kittie was quite callous as to Mr. Grainger's behaviour, as some freak of good fortune had brought Mr. Brooke to her right hand; but Phillis was annoyed almost beyond endurance.

From his manner, Hasson might have been her accepted lover. He spoke the most trifling remarks in a low undertone, as though no one else must hear them. He called her "Phillis" and "Phil," several times, very audibly. He scarcely ceased talking to her the whole of dinner time. Thyrlé's manner, from surprised silence, grew stiff, cold, frozen. He made not more than half a dozen observations, and those chiefly in reply to something Phillis managed to say to him. By no effort did he attempt to rival Grainger; and Phillis, vexed and weary, was only too glad when the dinner was over.

As she sat quietly in the drawing-room, pretending to listen to Miss Rose's singing, her thoughts wandered back to the time when a kind word or a bright glance from Hasson Grainger was happiness for her to live on for weeks; of a time, a little later,

when he cared not to live except under the smile in her soft, dark eyes; when he raved about her, wrote about her, quarrelled about her, until the whole county knew that Hasson Grainger was absurdly, extravagantly in love with Miss Kyriel, then little more than a schoolgirl. The parents on both sides had only objected to this affair on the score of youth; so Hasson, who was at college, did not come home for the vacation one summer, then went abroad; and Phillis "came out," and astonished all Knollingshamshire with her beauty. Perhaps the tears shed for that first handsome lover made her so reckless about giving pain to other men. The misery Hasson had caused by those dark eyes of his was amply avenged on his sex by those of Phillis—poor Phillis, with her wounded love and insulted pride! Perhaps she was not wholly to blame for her capricious—some men called it cruel—nature. Be that as it may, though she had had more admirers than she deserved, she invariably ended each of her mock love affairs by leaving the hero of it to his despair, and flitting off, herself unscathed, if not laughing at her victim, and ready for others. Such a life was not satisfactory, for she knew she was capable of higher things; and felt bitterly that it might have been a much better one—that she was ashamed to look back, afraid to look forward.

When the ladies left the dining-room, by reason of Miss Kyriel's absence Thyrlle and Grainger were next to each other. Finding this, Thyrlle quietly rose and went round to a seat at the other side of the table.

"I am afraid the fire is too hot for you, Mr. Thyrlle," said Sir George, observing this movement. "I think you do not know Mr. Grainger, do you?"

And he proceeded to introduce these who already knew each other as bitter enemies—the aggressor and the wronged.

For a moment the eyes of the two men flashed into each other's; the faintest of acknowledgments followed, but not a word was spoken. Grainger left the dining-room early; and when Thyrlle and the other men entered the drawing-room, they found him beside Miss Kyriel, earnestly pursuing his flirtation. Perhaps it was less within the province of a stranger like Thyrlle to attempt any interference with this than it would have been in that of any of her older friends; but Phillis was angry because he did not approach her—indignant that the

only word he spoke to her during the whole evening after dinner was "Good night," with a quiet bow, as he passed her in leaving the room. All this time, too, she had to endeavour to seem careless and vivacious as usual, lest Hasson should guess more than he had. So, not daring to be rude to him—as she longed to be—Phillis was driven into giving Mr. Grainger the little encouragement he required. She smiled and talked a little, and forgot how soft her beautiful eyes could look, even when she was not thinking of pleasant things.

"I said I would go to the Manor House to-morrow," thought Thyrlle to himself, that night, "or I would not go. Yet what the deuce does it signify to me with whom Miss Kyriel amuses herself? But—I had rather it had been any man in the world than Hasson Grainger."

It was a very quiet party that drove back to the Manor House.

Gilfred was gloomy, and vexed with Phillis. Mr. Brooke was revolving in his mind opportunities of gaining Miss Kyriel's favour, which he had lost; and Phillis unhappy, she not why—angry with Grainger, Thyrlle, herself; regretful and indignant, she could hardly keep back tears of vexation.

Only Kittie was content; and she, too, was silent in a happy dreamland of her own.

The next morning Phillis wrote to ask Grace and Lucy Grainger to come to luncheon, and join in a drive to a certain abbey—a show place, rather a long way off—to which they had intended to go ever since Mr. Brooke's arrival.

As Phillis had in her own mind prognosticated, Hasson Grainger appeared on horseback immediately after luncheon, to humbly ask if he might go also.

They were all standing by the hall door, ready to start. Gilfred looked annoyed and was silent; but Phillis, coming up without her hat, answered readily—

"Certainly, and you can take my place, if you like; it will be better for all to go together in the waggonette. I find I can't go this afternoon, I have such a lot of things to do."

Hasson looked angry and astonished, Grace and Lucy implored her to change her mind, Mr. Brooke looked miserable, and sweet little Kittie exclaimed—

"Oh, do come with us, dear Phil. You will be so dull at home alone."

Those words were the first which had ever attracted Mr. Brooke's attention towards Kittie Kyriel, and she, at least, never complained that she had spent a dull afternoon that day. But Gilfred, very much pleased with Phillis, interposed quickly—

"Oh, she will do very well. Phil is not likely to be dull. Now, will you arrange yourself there? Will you come up beside me on that box, Grace? That's all right. Are you going in the carriage, Hasson?—lots of room."

He rather sulkily declined. He would ride, he said.

So Phillis watched them start, and then fled to a certain deep bay window in an upstairs gallery—the only window upstairs in the house which commanded a view to the due south. From this gallery window could be also seen a long sweep of the Hallingford-road, as it descended a long, gentle slope towards the Manor House, called the Cross Roads Hill, from the fact of four cross roads meeting at the top of it.

And here, with the afternoon sun streaming pleasantly in—her eyes riveted on the hill, her hands idly folded—Phillis passed more than an hour.

Her idea, it is to be presumed, of "having such a lot of things to do."

IN THE DARK.

IN TWO CHAPTERS.—I.

"WHAT shall we do to amuse him?"

"Oh, there is always the river; and when he is tired of that we can drive to Byssham Woods, and picnic, or take him to see the catacombs in Park-place. After all, he is not the Shah, that we need worry ourselves to death over his entertainment."

It is I who say this, in a slightly fretful tone, which makes my good cousin look on me with mild parsonical rebuke. After all, it is rather upsetting to a mild village vicar to have to entertain a London belle and a real, live Guardsman at the same time. If I were one of his young lady parishioners, or only a cousin, he might give me the rebuke in words; being an heiress, however, and a visitor, he merely looks remonstrance.

To my great surprise, the London belle, a Miss Tremaine, and his wife's niece, puts in a word of comfort.

"I don't think you need be afraid of

Captain Gayle requiring much amusement, uncle. There is nothing he dislikes so much, in general."

Shakspeare says that a low voice is "an excellent thing in woman." Don't you think that Shakspeare sometimes tells—crams? Surely there are low voices which are not excellent, voices which seem to glide into your ear like cod liver oil—voices which creep when others run, and yet always reach you first. Laura Tremaine has a skin like white satin, dove-like eyes of rich, moist brown, and a long, round throat, on which her graceful head sways like some fair garden lily. Men rave about Laura, fight as to who shall hold her bouquet, and make compact groups round her chair directly she makes her appearance. Even Benedicks fall victims to the witchery of her liquid eyes, and happy wives grow grim at the mention of her name. The wonder is that she is not married; that at twenty-five any girl so wonderfully, seductively lovely should be still unappropriated by any one of her numerous adorers; while dozens of other girls, less beautiful, and infinitely less run after, are going off every day. My cousin, the Reverend John, says it is because she has no money; and men can't afford to marry penniless women now coals are so dear. Beauty goes down as coals go up. It is a mere item in the Stock Exchange. My cousin's wife says Laura is difficle, and hints at matches she might have made if she had only taken a little trouble.

I am rather of Laura's opinion in this matter, however, and think that fish who require so much "play" before they can be made to bite are seldom worth the landing. My fish bite soon enough, indecently soon sometimes, considering that I have had to say "No" three times since I "came out," fourteen months ago; but there is no triumph in the fact. Almost any fish will rise to a golden bait, and mine is so very glittering—I am so heavily, enormously weighted. Nineteen, no imbecility in the family, and one hundred thousand pounds! Could the most self-abnegatory of mankind refuse that? The answer is humiliatingly easy. I feel humiliatingly small whenever it occurs to me, and am thankful that Providence and my deceased parents have kindly settled my fate for me beforehand by bestowing me and my fortune in prospectu on Dallas Gayle, the only son of an old

friend, whose estate runs side by side with ours.

On second thoughts, I am not always thankful: not to-day, at any rate, when Dallas is coming for the express purpose of settling this old arrangement. It is not pleasant to be bound down to "love, honour, and obey" some one unknown, while your young affections are as yet centred in the pap bottle; to be ticketed "Sold" before nature has more than sketched you in barest monochrome, or the buyer emerged into knickerbockers. I should like to know what Dallas is like; to see whether he says, "Haw! don't know, weally; never could guess widdles," when I ask him why Dr. Kenealy and his client are alike; and subsides into gloomy and offended unintelligence when I briskly reply—

"Because they both got into trouble through Wapping (whopping) relations. How can you be so stupid?"

I should like to know whether he is the sort of man to call you a goose, and take you on his knee; or to make the whole house miserable if his little toe aches, and keep a vocabulary of pretty things to say to ladies who are not of his family. As it happens, I know nothing about Dallas. When we were wee children (when I was wee, at least), we were put to play together, and he set me in a big cucumber frame that I couldn't get out of, and went off to fish for sticklebacks in the pond by himself. After that he went to school. After that my parents died, and I went to school. After that he was at college, and, owing to his mother's death, we did not even meet in vacations; his being spent at home, mine with Aunt Fanny in Wales or Cousin John in Berkshire. After that I came out, and he, by ill luck, was with his regiment at Gibraltar. After that, just before the next season, he came home; and I, by more ill luck, took the measles, and had to rusticate at the rectory. Now I am well again—have been so some time, indeed. August has come; Miss Tremaine has withdrawn her charms from evacuated London, and come too. Dallas is coming—might have been here before if his manifold engagements had allowed him to accept the invitations sent immediately after my recovery.

And I know nothing about him—nothing more than his photos say—*i.e.*, broad shoulders, straight legs, good forehead and wide

mouth, hair curly—and the last of these was taken three years ago! He may be god or devil for aught I can tell; and yet in a few weeks I shall have fixed the day for marrying him. He will have gone through the formula of asking, "Will you marry me, Miss Jerningham?" I that of uttering the prearranged "Yes"; and it will all be settled without any romance, or sentiment, or lovers' quarrels, doubts, and agonies whatsoever. Well, after all, it is a great saving of trouble; only at nineteen one does not much care about trouble; and I should like to know why Miss Tremaine, who has sat through so many discussions of the absent hero without taking any part in them, should now, on the eve of his coming, suddenly allude to him as to one with whom she is well acquainted. In the causeless irritation of the moment I speak out.

"Do you know Captain Gayle, then, Laura? Why did you never say so?"

Her beautiful brown eyes open with gentle surprise.

"I have met him in London," she says, quietly.

"You never told me so."

"Did I not?" with a little hauteur. "Possibly I have not mentioned some hundreds of other acquaintances. It is surely not necessary."

I feel snubbed. Not now for the first time am I to learn that Miss Tremaine does not like me. The Reverend John looks at his watch.

"A quarter to five," he says, "and he is to come by the 5.10 train; isn't he, Daisy?" (This to me.) "Now, who is going to take the pony carriage into Henley to meet him? It's too hot for the water, I suppose, or you two girls could row down, and he could bring you back."

"Perhaps he can't row," I suggest. "Can't Jane go, if it is necessary that he *should* be met?"

John shakes his head.

"Jane can't leave Tommy, his teeth are so troublesome; and I have my sermon to write. Daisy, don't be inhospitable. What would you think if you had been met by only a servant?"

"I am not Captain Gayle, and perhaps there is nothing he dislikes so much as being met," I answer saucily, glancing at Laura.

She does not smile; on the contrary, she is very pale. A minute afterwards I hear her telling John, in her soft semi-whisper,

that she has a terrible headache. She does not think she can stay downstairs or appear at dinner this evening. John is mad on homœopathy. He darts at a big book and a little chest, and begins fumbling for the prescription. Laura stands waiting in courteous patience, her flower-like head a little bent, a stream of sunlight falling through the open French window upon her crisp white dress and clasped hands. On the window-sill I recline warm and flushed, my back against a great tub of azaleas, pink, white, and red, broken half-lights trembling through the leaves upon my insignificant little face and crumpled muslin gown. Outside the gnats are making a little black cloud in the yellow, burning sunshine. There is a smell of summer in the air, a weight of hot grass and roses and southern-scented heliotrope. John goes on puzzling over aconite and belladonna. He can't make out whether Laura is fair or not. Her eyes are dark; and in the middle the door opens, and James announces—

"Captain Gayle."

We all start. For one moment I see Laura's hands clench tight—tight, till the soft, white flesh grows darkly, cruelly red, beneath the slender fingers. For one moment, athwart that bar of gold-dusted sunshine, I see a face, ghastly pale, glaring at her in mute, wondering inquiry; and then Laura is gone, and John is shaking hands with the goodliest, kingliest man I have ever seen. Such a man! Ah, heavens! the Greeks of old made gods of them, and worshipped them openly on Mount Parnassus. It is women who deify them now, and pour out their worship in the secrecy of their own hearts; that is all the difference. And yet they are no better than other men: muscles do not mean magnanimity; size is not always coexistent with sanctity; beauty of face is not inseparable from ugliness of soul. With the generosity of nineteen, I make Dallas a present of all these inward charms to match the outer ones. With the headlong hurry of nineteen, I fall fiercely, furiously in love with the individual for whom I have been so prosaically destined from my babyhood, the individual I have been pettishly depreciating for the last six weeks. My face is scarlet as a peony when John introduces me as "Your old friend, Miss Jerningham." A shy, conscious, too delighted simper is quivering in every feature as I put out my hand to be taken in that strong, cool grasp.

Ah, well, one is only young once. "Men find women fools, and leave them cynics," saith one who, being a man, ought to know. At nineteen, folly is natural and delightful.

It is perhaps also natural that in the happy agitation of my own mind I pay small attention to a certain embarrassment and abstraction in Dallas's manner.

We sit down to talk, and he explains how he has been staying with a friend at Wargrave, and so did not come by train at all, but rode over, thus relieving John's palpable conscience pricks on the score of inhospitality. To my cousin he expresses a polite, if listless, hope that his arriving an hour earlier is not inconveniencing any one. To me he expresses a listless, if polite, satisfaction in seeing me so perfectly recovered. Once I catch a critical flash from the keen, semi-veiled depths of his blue eyes over my round and not unfreckled face, over my limp, crumpled frock, and fat, pink hands; but otherwise his manner is preoccupied, and his glance wanders to the door through which Laura vanished into the library. Afterwards I remember it all. Now, I am quite glad when he goes to his room, that I may rush to Jane's, and interrupt the spoonful of castor oil she is trying to force between Tommy's tight-locked teeth by the eager announcement—

"Oh, Jenny, he is the handsomest man you ever saw in your whole life—the most angelic nose, and eyes——"

I have not seen Miss Tremaine till then, though she is busy holding down Tommy's legs from vigorous efforts at kicking his mother's face. Now I stop short; yet surely there is no occasion for that look of cold, contemptuous surprise in her face. Is not Dallas mine, to praise or not, as I like?

Perhaps Miss Tremaine would sneer a second time if she could see the trouble I am taking to dress for dinner to-day—I, who never care how I look in general; but I do take trouble. I want to please my future lord. I turn over all my dresses, and select a silk—soft and thick, of shimmery, silvery green—not perhaps the dress best suited to nineteen; but exquisite in itself, and exquisitely made. I make Thomson strain up my hair till the back of my neck nearly cracks in two, and plait it in close yellow coils on the top of my head; and then I go downstairs, and am taken in to dinner by Dallas. Laura sits opposite to us. In

the simplest of white muslins, with one half-blown Gloire de Dijon rose nestling in the wavy masses of her gold-brown hair, with the low, red sunset behind making warm reflections over cloud-white robe and cream-white flesh, she looks more than lovely—almost divine. Dallas takes his eyes off her twice—once to ask me if I won't have some oranges à la neige, once to answer some question from Jane. For the first time in my life, I begin to believe myself capable of disliking some one almost as much as Miss Tremaine dislikes me.

OH, GIVE US FOOD!

THE suppliant nations of a mighty land,
Whose rajahs bowed beneath the English brand,

Stretch forth to us their trembling, empty hand—

“Oh, give us food—we die!”

Electric as the flash that bears it here,
That cry of famine echoing far and near,
To us in plenty from the scorched plains drear—

“Oh, give us food—we die!”

The sky withholds its increase-giving showers;
O'er the parched earth the brazen heaven lowers;
Their gods, appealed to, fail as earthly powers—

“Oh, give us food—we die!”

The father nerveless in his blank despair;
The mother withering in the sultry air;
The children asking rice with ghastly stare—

“Oh, give us food—we die!”

“Christians, who pray to other gods than these;
Masters, who rule us from beyond the seas;
Your famine-stricken slaves, on suppliant knees,

Cry—‘Give us food—we die!’

“You tell us, by your priests, of Him who bled;
Whose hand those five small loaves in plenty spread:
Pray Him, so piteously, to give us bread—

To give us food—we die!

“Maddened and blind in this our hour of need,
When dried within the dust the quickening seed.
No harvest! Hear us! Christians, do you heed?

Oh, give us food—we die!

“Our idols to our cries are silent still;
But yours the creed of charity—goodwill—
Your brothers cry, ‘Our wives, our children fill—

Oh, give them food—they die!’”

ANGUISH IN PRINT.

IN THE STRICTEST CONFIDENCE.

TEAR THE SIXTH.

ALLSHAMITES.

I COULD not help laughing and squeezing Clara's hand as I went in; and somehow I did not feel quite so dumpy and low-spirited as I did a few hours before; while, as I sat over the thick bread and butter they

gave us—though we were what, in more common schools, they would have called parlour boarders—I began to have a good look about me, and to take a little more notice of both pupils and teachers, giving an eye, too, at Mrs. Fortesquieu de Blount.

Only to think of the artfulness of that woman, giving herself such a grand name, and the stupidity of people themselves to be so taken in. But so it was; for I feel sure it was nothing else but the Fortesquieu de Blount which made mamma decide upon sending me to the Cedars. And there I sat, wondering how it would be possible for me to manage to get through a whole year, when I declare if I did not begin to sigh terribly. It was the coming back to all this sort of thing, after fancying it was all done with; while the being marched out two and two, as we had been that day, all round the town and along the best walks, for a perambulating advertisement of the Cedars, Allsham, was terrible to me. It seemed so like making a little girl of me once more, when I felt so old that I could feel a red spot burning in each cheek when I went out; and I told Clara of them, but she said they were caused by vexation and French lessons, and not by annoyance; while, when I looked angrily round at her, she only laughed.

It would not have mattered so much if the teachers had been nice, pleasant, lady-like bodies, and would have been friendly and kind; but they would not, for the sole aim of their lives seemed to be to make the pupils uncomfortable, and find fault; and the longer I was there the more I found this out, which was, as a matter of course, only natural. If we were out walking—now we were walking too fast, so that the younger pupils could not keep up with us; or else we were said to crawl so that they were treading on our heels; and do what we would, try how we would, at home or abroad, we were always wrong. Then over the lessons they were always snapping and catching us up and worrying, till it was miserable; while as to that Miss Furness, I believe honestly that nothing annoyed her more than a lesson being said perfectly, and so depriving her of the chance of finding fault. Why is it that people engaged in teaching must always be sour and disappointed-looking, and ready to treat those who are their pupils as if they were so many enemies? I suppose that it is caused by the great pressure of know-

ledge leaving room for nothing mild and amiable. Of course Patty Smith was very stupid; but it was enough to make the poor, fat, podgy thing ten times more stupid to hear how they did scold her for not doing her exercises. I declare it was quite a charity to do them for her, as it was not in her nature to have done them herself. There she would sit, with her forehead all wrinkled up, and her eyebrows quarrelling, while her poor eyes were nearly shut; and I'm sure her understanding was quite shut up, so that nothing could go either in or out.

Oh! I used to be so vexed, and could at any time have pulled off that horrid Mrs. Blunt's turban when she used to bring in her visitors, and then parade them through the place, displaying us all, and calling up first one and then another, as if to show off what papa would call our points.

The vicar of Allsham used to be the principal and most constant visitor; and he always made a point of taking great interest in everything, and talking to us, asking us Scripture questions; coming on a Monday—a dreadful old creature—so as to ask us about his sermon which he preached on the previous morning; and they were such terrible sermons that no one could understand—all about heresies, and ites, and saints with hard names; and he always had a habit of seeing how many parentheses he could put inside one another, like the lemons from the bazaars, till you got to be quite lost, and did not know which was the original, or what it all meant; and I'm sure sometimes he did not know where he had got to, and that was why he stopped for quite two minutes blowing his nose so loudly. I'm afraid I told him some very wicked stories sometimes when he questioned me; while if he asked me once whether I had been confirmed, he asked me twenty times.

I'm sure I was not so very wicked before I went down to Allsham; but I quite shudder now when I think of what a wretch I grew, nicknaming people and making fun of serious subjects; and oh, dear! I'm afraid to talk about them almost. The vicar used to sit in his pew in the nave in the afternoon, and let the curate do all the service; and I used to feel as if I could box his ears, for he would stand at the end of his seat, half facing round, and then, in his little, fat, round,

important way, go on gabbling through the service, as if he wasn't satisfied with the way the curate was going on, and must take it all out of his mouth. He used to put the poor young man out terribly, and the clerk too; so that the three of them used to tie the service up in a knot, or make a clumsy trio of it, with the school children tripping up their heels by way of chorus.

And then the old gentleman would be so loud, and would not mind his points, and would read the responses in the same fierce, defiant way in which he said the Creed in the morning, just as if he was determined that everybody should hear how he believed. While when the poor curate has been preaching, he has folded his arms and stared at the poor young fellow, now shaking his head, and now blowing his nose; while the curate would look hot, and keep looking down at him as much as to say, "May I advance that?" or "Won't that do, sir?" till it was quite pitiful.

Then the vicar used to bring his two daughters with him to the Cedars, to pat, and condescend, and patronise, and advise: two dreadful creatures that Clara called the giraffes, they were so tall and thin, and hook-nosed, and quite a pair in appearance; while they dressed exactly alike, in white crape long shawls and lace bonnets in summer; while hooked on to their father, one on each arm, as the fat, red-faced, little old gentleman used to come up the gravel walk, he used to look just like a chubby old angel, with a pair of tall, scraggy, half-open wings.

But though the two old frights were so much alike in appearance, they never agreed upon any point; and the poor people used to have a sad time of it with first one and then the other. They were always bringing books for the poor people's reading, and both had their peculiar ideas upon the subject of what was suitable. They considered that they knew exactly what every one ought to read, and what every one else ought to read was just the very reverse of what they ought to read themselves. But then they don't stand alone in that way, as publishers know when they bring out so many works of a kind that they know their customers will buy—not to read, but to give away—very good books, of course.

It was all very well to call them the giraffes, and that did very well for their height; but as soon as I found out how one

was all for one way, and the other immediately opposed her sister, declaring she was all wrong, I christened them Orthodoxy and Heterodoxy. It was very dreadful—wasn't it?—and unladylike, and so on; but it did seem to fit so, and all the girls took it up and enjoyed it; only that odious Celia Blang must tell Miss Furness, and Miss Furness must tell Mrs. Blunt, and then of course there was a terrible hubbub, and I was told that it was profane in one sense, and bad taste in another, and disgusting language in another; for the word "doxy" was one that no lady should ever bring her lips to utter; when if I did not make worse of it—I mean in my own conscience—by telling a most outrageous story, and saying I was very sorry, when I wasn't a bit.

Oh, the visitors! I used to be sick of them; for it was just as if we girls were kept to show. I used to call the place Mrs. Blunt's Menagerie, and got into a scrape about that; for everything I said used to be carried to Mrs. Blunt—not that I cared, only it made me tell stories, and say I was sorry when I was not. The curate and his wife used to come sometimes. A curious-looking couple they were, too, who seemed as if they had found matrimony a mistake, and did not approve of it; for they always talked in a quiet, subdued way, and walked as far apart from one another as they could.

He had not much to say for himself; but he used to make the best he could of it, and stretch his words out a tremendous length, saying pa-a-ast and la-ast; so that when he said the word everlasting in the service, it was perfectly phonographic, and you stared at him in dismay, as if there really never would be an end to it. We used to ask one another, when he had gone, what he had been talking about; but we never knew—only one had two or three long-stretched-out words here, and a few more there. But it did not matter; and I think we liked him better than his master, the vicar. As for his wife, she had a little lesson by heart, and she said it every time she came, with a sickly smile, as she smoothed one side at a time of her golden locks, which always looked rough; and hers were really golden locks—about eight-carat gold, I should say, like Patty Smith's trumpery locket; for they showed the red, coppery alloy very strongly—too strongly for my taste, which favours pale gold.

Pray don't for a moment imagine that I mean any vulgar play upon words, and am alluding to any vegetable in connection with the redness of the Mrs. Curate's hair; for she was a very decent sort of woman, if she would not always have asked me how I was, and how was mamma, and how was papa, and how I liked Allsham, and whether I did not think Mrs. de Blount a pattern of deportment. And then, as a matter of course, I was obliged to tell another story; so what good could come to me from the visits of our vicar and his followers?

TEAR THE SEVENTH.

A DOWNFALL.

I DECLARE my progress with my narrative seems for all the world like papa carving a pigeon pie at a picnic: there were the claws sticking out all in a bunch at the top, as much as to say there were plenty of pigeons inside; but when he cut into it, there was just the same result as the reader must find with this work—nothing but disappointing bits of steak, very hard and tiresome; but I can assure you, like our cook at home, all the pigeons were put in, and if you persevere you will be as successful as papa was at last, though I must own that pigeon is rather an unsatisfactory thing for a hungry person.

Heigho! what a life did I live at the Cedars: sigh, sigh, morning, noon, and night. I don't know what I should have done if it had not been for the garden, which was very nice, and the gardener always very civil. The place was well kept up, of course for an advertisement; and when I was alone in the garden, which was not often, I used to talk to the old man or one of his underlings, while they told of their troubles; and it's very singular, but though I thought the place looked particularly nice, I learnt from the old man that it was like every garden I had seen before, nothing like what it might be if there were hands enough to keep it in order. I spoke to papa about that singular coincidence, and he laughed, and said that it was a problem that had never yet been solved, how many men it would take to keep a garden in thorough order: "Gardener's Manual."

There was one spot I always favoured during the early days of my stay. It was situated on the north side of the house, where there was a dense, shady horse chest-

nut, and beneath it a fountain in the midst of rockery—a fountain that never played, for the place was too oppressive and dull; but a few tears would occasionally trickle over the stones, while the leaves grew long and pallid, and the blossoms of such flowers as grew here were mournful, and sad, and colourless. It seemed just the spot to sit and sigh as I bent over the ferns growing from between the lumps of stone; while you never could go, even on the hottest days, without finding some flower or another with a tear in its eye.

I hope no one will laugh at this latter conceit, and call it poetical or trivial; for if I like to write in a sad strain, and so express my meaning when I allude to dew-wet petals, where is the harm?

But to descend to everyday life. I talked a great deal just now about the different visitors we had, and the behaviour of our vicar in the church; and really it was a very nice little church, though I did not like the behaviour of some of the people who frequented it. Allsham being a small country town, as a matter of course, it possessed several grantees, some among whom figured upon Mrs. Blunt's circular; but it used to be so annoying to see about half a dozen of these big people cluster outside the porch in the churchyard, morning and afternoon, to converse apparently, though it always seemed to me that they stood there to be bowed to by the tradesmen and mechanics, while they never entered the church themselves until the clergyman was in the reading desk, and the soft introductory voluntary was being played on the organ by the Fraulein, who played in the afternoon, the organist in the morning. Then the grantees would come marching in slowly and pompously, as a flock of geese one after another into a barn, proceeding majestically to their seats; when they would look into their hats for a few moments, seat themselves, and then look round, as much as to say, "We are here now. You may begin." It used to annoy me from its regularity, and the noise their boots made while the clergyman was praying; while they might just as well have come in a minute sooner; but then it was the custom at Allsham, and I was but a visitor.

I did not get into any trouble until I had been there a month, when Madame Blunt must give me an imposition of a hundred lines for laughing at her, when I'm sure no

one could have helped it had they tried ever so hard. In the school-room there was a large, flat, boarded thing, about a foot high, all covered with red drugget; and upon this used to stand Mrs. Blunt's table and chair, so that she was a great deal higher than any one else, and could look over the room easily. Then so sure as she used to sit down upon this dais, as she used to call it, there was a great deal of fuss and arranging of skirts, and settling of herself into her chair, which she would then give two or three pushes back, and then fidget forward; and altogether she would make more bother than one feels disposed to make sometimes upon being asked to play before company, when the music stool requires so much arranging.

Now, upon the day in question she had come in with her head all on one side, and pulling a very long face, pretending the while to be very poorly, because she was half an hour late, and we had been waiting for the lesson she was down in the table to give. Then, as we had often had it before, and knew perfectly well what was coming, she suddenly caught sight of the clock.

"Dear me, Miss Sloman! Bless my heart, that clock is very much too fast," she would exclaim. "It cannot be nearly so late as that."

"I think it is quite right, Mrs. de Blount," Miss Sloman would say, shaking her moustache.

"Oh, dear me, no, Miss Sloman; nothing like right. My pendule is quite different."

Of course we girls nudged one another—that is not a nice word, but poked or elbowed seems worse; and then, thinking I did not know, Clara whispered to me that her ladyship always went on like that when she was down late of a morning. But I had noticed it several times before; while there it was, always the same tale, and the silly old ostrich never once saw that we could see her when she had run her stupid old head in the sand.

Well, according to rule, she came in, found fault with the clock, but took care not to have it altered to match her gimcrack French clock in her bed-room, which she always called her pendule. Then she climbed on to the dais; and, as usual, she must be very particular about the arrangement of the folds of her satin dress, which was one of the company or parent-seeing robes, now taken into everyday use.

"Look out," whispered Clara to me.

"What for?" I said, in the same low tone.

But instead of answering she pretended to be puzzled with something in her lesson, and got up to go and ask Miss Furness what it meant.

But all this while Mrs. Blunt was getting up and sitting down, and rustling about like an old hen in a dustbath, to get herself in position; when all at once there was a sharp scream and a crash; and, on jumping up, I could see the lady principal upon the floor behind the dais, while she had pulled over the table, and the ink was trickling down upon her neck.

Of course, any lady in her senses would have got up directly, and tried to repair the mischief; but not she, for there she lay groaning as if in terrible pain, while Miss Furness and Miss Sloman, one at either hand, were trying to raise her, the Fraulein the while dragging off the table, and exclaiming in German; but not the slightest impression was made upon the recumbent mass—which seems to me the neatest way of saying "lying-down lump."

Clara ran out of the room, holding her handkerchief to her mouth, but pretending all the while to be frightened out of her wits; and then what a fuss there was getting the fallen one into her seat again—but not on the dais—bathing her face, chafing her hands, sprinkling her with eau de Cologne, holding salts to her nose; and it was just as she was groaning the loudest and sighing her worst that Clara came back, and began to look in her droll, comical way at me.

I had not seen through the trick at first; but all at once I recalled Clara's saying "Look out!" when it flashed through my mind in an instant that she had moved back the chair and table upon the dais, so that at the first good push back of her chair the poor woman fell down; and so, what with the thoughts of the wicked trick, and Mrs. Blunt's long-drawn face, and Clara's droll eyes peering at me so saucily, I could not help it, but burst out into a loud laugh.

Talk of smelling-salts, and bathing, and chafing, why they were as nothing in comparison with that laugh. Poor Mrs. Blunt! I dare say she did hurt herself, for she was stout and heavy; but she was herself again in an instant, and looking at me in a horribly furious manner. But I did not care—not a bit; and I could not help it, for it

was not my fault; but I could see how that she thought that it was, as she burst out—

"Miss Bozerne!"

"Such unladylike behaviour," chimed in Miss Furness.

"So cruel!" exclaimed Miss Sloman.

"Ach ten!" ejaculated the Fraulein; while I caught sight of Miss Murray looking quite pained at me.

"I did not think that a young lady in my establishment would have been guilty of such atrocious conduct," exclaimed Mrs. Blunt, furiously.

"No, indeed," said Miss Furness.

"Something entirely new," exclaimed Miss Sloman, tossing her pretty head.

And there stood poor Miss Bozerne—poor me—feeling so red and ears tingling; for though I said that I did not care, I did, and very much too; though nothing should have made me confess that I knew the cause of the accident; and though all the while I was sure that dreadful Mrs. Blunt thought I had moved her chair, I bore it, determined not to betray Clara, little thinking the while that the time would come when, upon a much more serious occasion, I should be dependent upon her generosity. But it really did seem too bad of the tiresome thing, who was holding down her head, and thoroughly enjoying the whole scene; and no doubt it was excellent fun for her, but it was very hard upon poor me.

"Leave the room, Miss Bozerne, and retire to your dormitory," exclaimed Mrs. Blunt at last, in a very awful tone of voice, and putting on every scrap of dignity she could command.

I felt just as if I should have liked to have said "I won't;" but I controlled myself, and making a sweeping curtsy, I went out, feeling very spiteful. And then, when I was upstairs and had received my hundred line French imposition, I commenced work by writing a cross letter to mamma, and telling her that I would not stay in the nasty school any longer; and declaring that if she did not come soon and fetch me, I should run away.

But though it was a very smartly written, satirical letter, I tore it up afterwards; for something seemed to whisper to me that—that—well, that— But if those who have read so far in my confessions will have patience, and quietly keep on reading leaf after leaf, trying the while to sympathize with me, no doubt they will form a judg-

ment for themselves of the reason which prevented me from sending the letter to mamma, and made me try to put up with the miseries of that select establishment for young ladies—the Cedars, Allsham.

TABLE TALK.

MR. LENNOX BROWNE, who has for colleague Mr. Llewellyn Thomas, is at the head of the new Hospital for Diseases of the Throat and Ear, which has been opened by the Gray's Inn-road. This is an institution where no one can get advice without a proper introduction, and that passport is, perhaps, the most suitable that could be imagined. The sufferer has not to get a letter from a subscriber, or to ask for votes, but "the urgency of the case" is the talismanic key which opens the doors of a building where the surgeon's skill does battle with the inroads of disease.

A GOOD DEAL has been written and said about the origin of coal, and the generally accepted opinion is that it is of vegetable origin. Witness, say our scientific men, the traces of tree and plant found in it. We have a friend who has his own theory, which denies this, and is not promulgated because, as he says, no one would believe; but, all the same, it is worthy of great respect, and looks uncommonly like the reality. His idea is that coal was formed during some of the vast volcanic changes which took place upon the earth's surface; and that its formation was similar to that of the great pitch lake of Trinidad itself, a volcanic formation—really a bed of coal, not submitted to the pressure of superincumbent strata for many thousands of years. He supposes that coal was a volcanic pitch that flowed over vast surfaces of the earth; and to prove it, he says, look at some seams of coal and see how they are joined. One flood of pitch has begun to cool, and then another has been poured upon it, and there they are—not one homogeneous mass, but two separate, unjoined seams of coal, separated only by what seems a fine dust. Then, as to the vegetable theory, he says that, though you may find trunks of trees surrounded by the coal, no trace of vegetable origin is in the coal itself, though forest ferns and other growths are abundant in the strata above and below. There is his theory, and it looks very real. The vast floods of black,

liquid, volcanic pitch or mud must have come seething up from nature's laboratory, during some eruption, to flow over the land. It is worthy of thought, and the more it is considered the greater seems its probability.

SINCE THE ABOVE was written we have come upon an article in "Macmillan's Magazine," which propounds the customary theory. The following is an extract:—"Coal, according to the modern hypothesis, is merely a transmuted vegetable soil which accumulated, not under water, but under the trees composing primeval forests. These forests stood on areas which were subjected to repeated changes of level in relation to that of the ocean. It must be understood that though the ground beneath us is popularly regarded as the type of everything steady and immovable, this earth of ours is far from deserving the character for stability with which it is thus fondly credited; absolute rest is all but unknown to it. It happens that even at the present day there are certain regions, such as those subject to volcanic disturbances, whose tendencies are always to move upwards, like the more aspiring of our youths; while there are others, such as the coral regions, which are steadily sinking, like those less fortunate youths who have failed in the voyage of life. So it was in the olden time. The coal beds appear to have accumulated on the latter class of areas—areas of depression—geographical regions in which the earth had a tendency to sink below the level of the ocean. Mud and silt had collected upon such areas until the deposits thus formed reached the surface-level of the water; and then came what appears to have been necessary to the growth of the coal plants—namely, a bed of peculiar grey mud. We do not know why that mud came there, or whence it was derived. That it was very different from the ordinary deposits—the sandstones and shales—which accumulated in the carboniferous ocean, is shown by the physical properties which it still possesses, and which they do not possess—properties which fit it for the purpose to which it is now devoted, of being manufactured into fire-bricks, whence its common name of fire-clay. That this grey mud was the soil preferred by the great majority of the plants constituting the carboniferous forests is as obvious as that the oak woods of Hereford-

shire and the sunny south will not flourish upon the cold soils of the Lancashire uplands. Minute spores, representing the seeds of the plants which afterwards became coal, were floated to this mud by wind and water; and finding there a suitable soil, they germinated, struck root, and soon converted the swampy area into a magnificent forest. As the trees grew they shed successive showers of their microscopic spores, which often fell in such vast quantities as to constitute an important contribution to the accumulating vegetable soil; but along with them there fell other and more bulky objects, such as might be expected to accumulate under a semi-tropical forest. The dead leaves, broken branches, and prostrated stems alike contributed a share to the decaying vegetable mass. In the tropical regions of the present day such accumulations become rapidly decomposed, and pass away in gaseous forms; but such does not appear to have been the case in the carboniferous age—at least, not in the same degree. Even in Lancashire, notwithstanding all the influences tending to diminish the bulk of the vegetable mass—such as atmospheric decomposition—chemical changes occurring during the later processes of mineralization, and the pressure of superimposed rocks prolonged throughout all subsequent ages, we have coal seams six and seven feet in thickness; whilst they occur in America—as, for example, in the oolitic coal-field on the James River—with the surprising thickness of between thirty and forty feet. Such accumulations of vegetable soil as these thicknesses of solid coal represent, almost exceed comprehension, and must indicate enormous periods of undisturbed forest life. But at length a change came over the sylvan scene; the land sank—whether suddenly or slowly we have no means of saying. The numbers of dead fishes found on the roofs and upper portions of some coals seem to indicate a sudden rush of pure water over the land, followed by the quick destruction of the fishes, poisoned by the bituminous vegetable mud in which they found themselves entangled. In other cases the roof of clean blue shale, devoid of all appearance of either animal or vegetable remains, and resting immediately upon a defined surface of pure coal, is suggestive of a slower submergence, allowing time for the destruction and obliteration of all traces of growing vegetation upon its surface.”

HAS IT EVER occurred to anybody that for every particular British amusement there is a peculiar slang adopted by those who write in the journals respecting its progress? To take, for instance, one thing constantly cropping up in connection with the boat race. Some brilliant wielder of the pen once conceived the idea of comparing the rough little waves of the Thames to pieces of water. The water was broken—broken up—hence, then, into lumps; and he dubbed the appearance as “lumpy.” Ever since, in every journal, just before the boat race we have that eternal “lumpy” water. “The water was lumpy”—“If the water prove lumpy”—“With such lumpy water”—and so on, ad nauseam. Surely the time has arrived for a change. Variety is charming; and therefore it is suggested to “Our Aquatic Correspondent” that he might introduce a little novelty. If he would only give play to his imagination, he might, in place of the lumps, give nubs—or, say, nubblly; speak of chunks, knobbls. Chumpy is a good word; or better still, clod or cloddy. See how it reads: “The water in Corney Reach was as cloddy as a new-ploughed field.”

ONE MIGHT ALMOST think that, in accordance with our general advance beyond the habits and manners of our ancestors, we had gone ahead of time itself. At all events, when, according to our calendar, it is Christmas, we are still in the dull, autumnal weather; our winter is in February, our April is made miserable with winds that by rights belong to March, and when we are in May the season is really that of April. There is no doubt about it: we have got on too fast, and the calendar wants putting back about three weeks to make things fit.

AT THE Westminster Police-court the other day, in a case of stabbing, the prisoner gave the name of Chang-Chang. The reporter naively adds that he was “a Chinaman.”

All Contributions are attentively considered, and unaccepted MSS. are returned on receipt of stamps for postage; but the Editor cannot hold himself responsible for any accidental loss. No unaccepted MSS. will be returned until a written application has been made for them.

Terms of Subscription to ONCE A WEEK, free by post:—Weekly Numbers for Six Months, 5s. 5d.; Monthly Parts, 5s. 8d.

ONCE A WEEK

NEW SERIES.

No. 330.

April 25, 1874.

Price 2d.

JACK'S SISTER; OR, WOMANLY PAST QUESTION.

CHAPTER XXV.

"HE WOULD OF COLDNESS, THOUGH INDULGED,
COMPLAIN."



ISS DELA-
MAYNE coming
here, Enid?"

"Yes, next week. Just think how curious I must be to see Jack's Baby, and my new sister! I am so glad that she has at last fixed a time for coming."

"You have got her photograph! Have a care. I have known people who lived to repent they had ever desired more than the portraits of their sisters-in-law."

"Clifton! do you know what an impolite speech you are making? or is it that you think no reality can excel that lovely little picture?"

"No. I beg your pardon, Enid. It was rude—horribly so; but somehow we are so comfortable and happy in the present state of things here, that I rather dread the arrival of a stranger to take up all your time and put us on our company manners."

Enid laughed merrily. She was sitting under the walnut tree, looking fair and grave in her deep mourning, with broken glints of gay June sunshine falling through the leafy canopy above, and casting stray yellow lights on the bent brown head and the pile of soft white needlework, which passed so swiftly through the shapely hands that held it. Clifton Gore leant against the tree trunk,

looking very cool, very handsome, and rather sentimental in his light summer clothing, and the grey-green half-lights toning down his bright colouring and golden hair. Outside, stacks of fuchsias rained down crimson fire upon the velvet-padded lawn. Stately snow-white lilies, and slender, flame-like scarlet flags waved languid greetings across winding ribbons of calceolarias and sapphire-blue lobellias; bees hummed drowsily in the sunshine; scents of new-mown hay and musky crimson roses filled the air with perfume; while up from the river meadows came a ripple of schoolboy laughter, softened by the breeze; and "chirrup-irrup-irrup, thrue-thrue-tsweet, chirrup, tsweet-sweet-sweet," went Enid's canary, trilling gay melodies from his little cage outside the dining-room.

It was all very bright, very fair, very warm; and, despite her black garments, Enid made no incongruous centre to the scene around her. Six months had done much towards softening the grief which could never be quite forgotten; but which, borne so lovingly, seemed sanctified into a blessing rather than a chastisement. She could speak of her dear father now—did speak of him often—without the tears welling quite so readily as at first into those great, grey eyes. She could even think of his gain rather than her loss, and picture the happy meeting between him and her mother in the realms above; dwelling tenderly on all there would be to tell of the children left behind; and taking full comfort from those gracious promises in Holy Writ, which seemed to place the orphan under special care and guidance.

Jack, too, was an immense comfort to her, a never-failing joy and pride, in which to take full rest and contentment. Sorrow for his father and love for Baby had indeed softened the husk of that young man's character; and of late he had seemed to take his sister under special care, never going

anywhere without her, and not only sharing her rides and walks himself, but actually taking the trouble to be a little sociable and civil towards their county friends, so as to enlist their sympathies in Enid's loneliness.

His great work, however, was in the bank, to which he devoted himself with characteristic eagerness and energy, leaving no tittle undone which could possibly conduce to strengthening the time-honoured firm; and proving satisfactorily to the most doubting of onlookers that Leyburn and Co. was no whit less flourishing and substantial than Leyburn and Son had ever been. The new "Co." was Mr. Leyburn's late cashier, a worthy old man, who had been in the bank ever since his boyhood, and knew every iota of its management as well as the owner himself, if not better; and to him Jack had offered the partnership within a week of his father's death.

"I know very little, as yet, of banking, Mr. Harding," he said, in his blunt manner; "and if I chose to retire, I find I could afford to live comfortably enough on the income we already have; but I do not intend to do so. I mean, God willing, to put my whole endeavours to the task of keeping up Leyburn and Son as firm and strong as it ever was from the beginning; and if you will assist me by accepting the partnership, and giving me the aid of your long experience in the concern, I believe we shall succeed and carry it on bravely till there is another son in the firm to help us."

"Are you going to be married, then, Mr. Jack?" old Harding asked, looking half admiringly, half anxiously into the resolute young face, with its square, determined jaw, and grave, good-tempered mouth.

Jack nodded.

"Yes, I am. I had just told my poor father about it, when— And now it will only be delayed till the first year of mourning is over. Well, Mr. Harding, do you agree?"

And old Harding gave him his hand, with a ready assent, which was only the beginning of a cordial friendship, founded on mutual liking and respect, and strengthening day by day until the old man's death.

Jack's success with the bank was therefore an additional subject of thankfulness with his aunt and sister. The former lady, indeed, had never been quite so strong, either in mind or body, as before the shock of her brother's sudden death. She had lost a great deal of her keen, common sense

shrewdness, left most of the housekeeping and responsibility in Enid's hands, and made no difficulty in allowing Jack to be fully master in his own house. I am afraid, too, that she took an overdose of blue pill at present, varied by occasional launches into homœopathy, from which she always returned (like the Scriptural dog) to her favourite medicine; and, not rising till late in the day, took little active share in her old duties, save that of generally directing and lecturing her niece. Enid did not mind the lectures. She had grown used to them by this time, taking them as placidly as a cat does cream; and finding the extra duties a compensation for some of the terrible blank which her father's loss had left upon her hands.

Merle was away in London. Strangely enough, she did not lament his absence.

I have spoken a good deal of that young gentleman in the last few chapters—more than his fair share, perhaps; but there are still some few words to add in explanation of this last remark.

During the first few weeks after Mr. Leyburn's death, he had proved (as we have seen) all that the best and sweetest nature could have been to Enid in her grievous trial, and had grown nearer and dearer to her than he had ever been before. After this there was a change, and what that change was I can hardly explain. Enid did not understand it herself, although she was the chief sufferer. It was not that he was less loving, or less tender. On the contrary, he was more so; only it was no longer the unselfish tenderness of brother and friend, but the jealously exacting ardour of a lover; and this (it being quite a new phase of character to Enid) she did not in the least comprehend. It frightened her vaguely, confused all her old notions, and drove her back on a timid reserve, which in its turn annoyed and offended her lover; and made their intercourse far less pleasant and satisfactory than it had ever been in the past.

The first shock of his uncle's death over, Merle had indeed cheered up fast, and become even more cheerful than usual. This was not unnatural. He had just won the woman of his heart for his own; his debts were paid; his prospects in life improved; and—an uncle is only an uncle, after all. He, however, forgot that Enid, in losing her fond and indulgent father, was

suffering in quite a different manner from himself; and though gentlemanly propriety, and the unpleasant constraint of his only tacitly recognised, and more than tacitly disapproved engagement, obliged him to treat her with extra gravity and deference in public, his manner when alone with his betrothed was widely different, and variable to such a degree that it passed her power to understand or follow him. Sometimes he would be so passionately loving that his ardour almost frightened her; sometimes jealous, captious, or irritable, at others gloomily self-reproachful; so that, altogether, Enid could not help feeling as if *her* Merle were some one altogether different from this new and exacting master, and to dread with an unconfessed shrinking, for which she bitterly reproached herself, the occasions on which chance, or Miss Leyburn, left them to the enjoyment of each other's society.

Poor Enid! She was more really unhappy at this time on Merle's account than even from her father's death. The latter grief came from God, and could be healed by God alone. The former was a perplexity caused by either herself or Merle, and dependent on either herself or Merle to remove. Naturally, between these two alternatives, she preferred to lay the blame on her own shoulders; and fretted herself thin in trying to remove an obstacle the very nature of which she did not comprehend. How should she, when, though she loved Merle, and had loved him all his life with a tenderness and fidelity which nothing could subdue or shake, she was yet no particle "in love" with him? and, never having felt the existence of that stronger and more earthly passion, could not even divine, till long afterwards, *what* it was which was wanting in her, or which troubled her in him.

She did her best—tried laboriously to put her sorrow away, and enter into his varying moods; tried not to shrink from those new looks and kisses; not to feel thankful when Aunt Jane broke up a tête-à-tête; not to realize that Merle, the lover, was in fact and in truth a very different and a much less agreeable person than Merle, the brother-friend and cousin: strove also by earnest prayer, by never-failing patience, and a more unconstrained and affectionate demeanour in public than in private, to live up to her vow, and prepare herself for the time when she should be his wife.

"It will be all right then," she told herself. "He will settle back into his old ways. It is only the newness and uncertainty which make him so restless and strange now."

Merle saw it all. At least, I think so. What time and trouble taught Enid, his different life and wider experience must long since have made familiar to the Oxford man; but this greater penetration was no pleasure, rather a keen and bitter flavour in his draught of triumph. Again and again he realised, in every nerve of his sensitive nature, that, with all her wide and self-sacrificing affection, Enid did not feel, and could not even enter into, his own passion for herself; and this consciousness, coupled with the knowledge of how he had urged, and almost forced, her into her new position against her own judgment—and well-nigh against her will—chafed and stung him almost beyond endurance. Yet he *could* not let her go. He knew that she did love him in her own way; and that that way was more than the love of many women. He gave the most implicit trust to her fidelity and devotion; more than all, he loved her with a passion and fervour beyond all control; and which, if only purged pure of his selfishness and impatience, might have made his life happy, and won him the fruition of his highest hopes.

Merle, however, could not be unselfish—it was not in him; and Enid's very fascination for him prevented her being able to teach it. If he had been different, if he could have entered into her feelings, and curbed his own passion in respect to the innocence and unconsciousness, which were really her greatest charms, instead of fretting at them as signs of coldness and indifference, I believe that his cousin would quietly and instinctively have grown to feel towards him as though he were indeed the husband of her choice, and satisfied his warmest aspirations. Even as it was, while hurting her with reproaches and vaguely bitter hints, I do not believe he ever really blamed her in his heart; or would have loved her as well had she been different—"like other girls," as he used angrily to tell her she was not: Indeed, at times he made her more unhappy still by vehement bursts of remorse and vague self-reproaches, as unintelligible to her as his impatience had been before.

It was a miserable, uncomfortable state of things; and, for the first time in her life, Enid felt relieved when he returned to college.

She had seen him once since then—after Easter, when he took his degree and left college for good; but then things were different in a measure. Clifton Gore was at home, and he was not a person to play third fiddle where another man was concerned. The whole family were spending the Easter recess at Amberley; and Clifton, who was reading in a leisurely manner for the bar, came with them, and contrived to spend his, or rather the greater part of it, at Marshton Fallows, with the Leyburns.

He was more in love with Enid now than ever, neither Rome nor London having succeeded in obliterating her image even temporarily; and Lady Gore had not only found out his secret, but, having sounded Sir Henry on the subject, contrived to intimate to her darling, with much delicate tact, that the alliance would not be disapproved by his own family. Clifton kissed his mother gratefully, but declined to use her kindness; or even talk about the love which, contrary to his usual flames, had grown and strengthened in silence and absence.

He had the most perfect, gentlemanly sense of the respect due to Enid's recent grief; and would have thought it equally ill-bred and selfish to have intruded his love upon her at such a time. The very sight of her heavy crape, and sweet, sad eyes, added to the reverence he felt for his unconscious idol, and the more warmly and cordially she turned to him, the more gentleness and deference this young nineteenth-century Paladin strove to infuse into his manner. He would not take advantage of her kindness when grief and loneliness had naturally subdued and weakened her. In the summer she might have grown happier, and then—

Meanwhile, was not Enid's confidence and friendship more than sufficient honour to the man who loved her? With which reminder, he held his peace; and merely devoted every thought in her company to making her feel happy and comfortable; Enid the while liking him better day by day, and all unconscious of the feelings hid under that playful, courteous manner.

Some one else saw plainer. Merle!

Some one else was jealous. Ditto!

This sequence of facts was only natural.

Merle liked Clifton, and admired him; saw that he admired Enid, and that she returned the compliment with interest; suspected a rival, and knew that his betrothed

was utterly innocent of the possibility of such a fact.

What was he to do?

He could not warn Clif against poaching on other men's preserves, because Miss Leyburn had insisted on the engagement not being made public till after his ordination, which could not take place for another six months; and he, with a man's liking for preserving his outward freedom at any rate, and a man's hatred to talk and gossip, had not only acquiesced at once, but impressed the benefit of such reticence on Enid's naturally frank disposition. He did not wish to put her on her guard, because he thought that would be simply inviting the danger he deprecated. Seeing how perfectly guileless she was at present, and how frankly she extended her friendship to her brother's friend, Merle felt that it would be wiser to let matters alone rather than disturb her mind and arouse her womanly vanity by a knowledge of the conquest she had made; and accordingly made up his mind to do nothing.

A wise resolve—at least, in my opinion.

Women can hardly help pitying the men who love them; and pity is akin to—something else.

"Verbum sap," &c.

Unfortunately for consistent reasoning, a momentary burst of jealousy proved stronger than all this well-weighed sapientia.

Merle got huffed at some trifle in which Clifton's thoughtful attention had contrived to gratify a wish of Enid's which he had forgotten; and temper getting the better of prudence, the lover gave vent to certain resentful utterances, which he regretted as soon as they had passed his lips.

Enid stood and looked at him with wide, grave eyes of most exceeding wonder.

"Merle!—are you joking?"

"Joking!" he answered, irritably. "Am I likely to joke on such a subject? I assure you, it is not so pleasant for me to be put on one side, and see my promised wife accepting the attentions of a man who is palpably— There, don't let us talk of it."

"But—don't be angry, Merle, please—I would rather you finished what you were saying. I am very stupid, for I don't think I quite understand you sometimes; and it grieves me. Do you mean that Clifton, Jack's friend and your old schoolfellow, is paying me any more atten—"

"No, no—nonsense, dear." Merle was annoyed at his folly now, and did not like this calm, simple questioning. "I did not mean anything. Only a man in love, you know—and I was upset, tired. There, forgive me, little woman—won't you?"

And he put his arm round her, trying to laugh into her serious eyes.

"I would so much rather you told me," she persisted, a little earnestly. "These things that you only half say puzzle me so afterwards, and I do so want to do right, and please you."

"Please me!" Merle exclaimed, paling, as was his manner under strong excitement. "If you only wanted to come to me as much as I do to have you, that would please me. But all you care about, Enid, is to do right—to—— My God! you are so cold, it is enough to drive a man mad who loves you as I do!"

His arm was still round her, but he did not feel her trembling in his own excitement; and she turned her face away that he might not see there how cruelly his passion hurt her; and held her peace till she could force her voice to quiet and composure.

"Merle, I did not know I was cold. I cannot help it. You know how dearly I love you—there is no need to tell you that. But if I cannot make you happy as—as—— we had better——"

Her voice would break, after all; and Merle caught her closer to him in a fit of penitence.

"My darling, you do make me happy. It is all my own idiotic nonsense and jealousy. There! Enid, little woman, don't look so sad. What a wretch I am to bother you so!—I, who have no right to come near you! Love, do smile and forgive me, or I shall think you are remembering this rubbish!"

And yielding to his passionate contrition, Enid did look up and smile—even kissed him soothingly, and let him go, thinking her quite contented.

But it was too much. Had she been a weaker, more fragile and impulsive woman, health, or love, must have given way under the constant strain of scenes like this. As it was— Well, she was not happy; and when he went away again, her sigh had as much relief as regret in its burden.

That word respecting Clifton was not, however, at once forgotten; and on the oc-

casion of young Gore's next visit she treated him with such unwonted, cold reserve that he, with the timidity of true love, fancied he had offended somehow, and behaved during the next few days of his stay with a scrupulous gravity and punctiliousness which easily convinced Enid of his want of evil intention, and made her letters to Merle very bright and satisfactory. Merle wrote her back, reproaching her for having paid any heed to his folly, and reiterating that it was only the groundless irritation of a moment.

He was still away in June, nominally engaged in the double work of getting a volume of essays published, and looking out a travelling tutorship to occupy the months till he should be of age to be ordained, but actually enjoying a dip into the social gaieties of the season, when Lady Gore, who could never stand more than a fortnight of London, came down to reinhabit the Hall in company with her son.

Enid was more cheerful now; the weather lovely; and Jack so anxious that she should accept the winningly offered hospitality of his friend's mother, that she fairly forgot her passing scruples, and—seeing Clifton brighter, franker, and more devoted to Jack than ever—gave herself up to the enjoyment of the hour, and grew plump and rosy upon it accordingly.

Clifton watched her old, sunny graciousness revive with the gladsome thought that now he might surely speak; and began to haunt her steps for a favourable opportunity of doing so.

Jack, seeing all about him bright, began to wish for a little special brightness of his own, and wrote off to Baby. Now, that young lady had before been pressed to pay a visit to Marston Fallows, and make Enid's acquaintance; but hitherto she had only coquetted with it, dreading a dull time in a dull country town, with nothing but crape folds around her, and no gaieties to break the undivided society of her new relatives. In his last letter, however, Jack had mentioned the residents at the Hall, and Clifton's constant visits; and Baby's answer was set to a different tune from usual. She was "longing," she wrote, "to see Marston Fallows; and the dear old bank; and the sweet, quiet Cedars; and oh! more than all, to embrace her dear Enid. She had only stayed away till now from dread of even *her* presence being an intru-

sion on their grief; but now the summer was here, and the weather so charming, it would do darling Enid good to be cheered up; and accordingly she would accept their kind invitations, and, if not inconvenient, would arrive by such and such a train."

Jack read the epistle in immense though silent glee; gave it to Enid; and marched off to the bank, trying not to look rampantly glorious. Enid flitted about the house in a state of equal and more demonstrative delight; and took advantage of Clifton's calling in the afternoon to pour out her happiness, in full expectation of the usual unbounded sympathy.

The result was disappointing.

"I have not very much to do with my time," she said, in answer to his grumbling observation; "and I do not think Baby, who is going to be my sister and Jack's wife, need put us on company manners. Why, she will be one of us."

Clifton knew enough of the world to think this problematical. He was, however, much too vexed at his late impoliteness to say so, even if he could have borne to pain Enid by such a suggestion; and therefore answered very humbly—

"You are right, of course, and it was very selfish of me; only it is so hard to be unselfish sometimes. Don't you think so?"

"Perhaps. But I don't think I quite know what you refer to," Enid answered, thoughtfully; then, looking up with quick, affectionate sympathy—"You think Jack will be absorbed! Why, Clifton, don't you know him better? Jack hasn't such a little nature as to have only room for one tenant at a time. You are his friend—his first and best and dearest friend. You could not be less, though he had a dozen wives. Surely you can't doubt it?"

"No, indeed," said Clifton, warmly; "but——"

The sunbeams were playing on her broad, fair forehead; on her clear eyes, lifted in sweetest persuasive earnestness to his.

Clifton's prudence gave way. His head bent lower. The full, passionate sweetness hidden in his dark blue eyes leapt out in answer to that gentle glance.

"I was not thinking of *Jack*, Enid," he said, his voice very low, and with a quiver of repressed fervour in it.

Then Enid knew!

WORK FOR THE WITS.

A PUZZLE indeed: "A-v-r-e-l, C-o-f-o-c-k." A specimen, this, of one of the addresses sent through the Post Office. "Avrel, Coffock," and written in a straggling hand, with a pen that evidently had an inclination, hard to curb, for running into the corner of the envelope and making loops as large as lassoes. The letter is one of many sent to one particular desk at St. Martin's-le-Grand, where certain clerks make it their study to battle with ignorance, and to untie twisted characters sometimes as puzzling as the celebrated Gordian knot.

Comparison, sound and deep thought are often required, but long practice makes great perfection and skill; and at a glance, in spite of the hideous scrawl of the illiterate writer, this address is without trouble deciphered.

The very ignorant are peculiarly phonetic in their spelling, and, regarding the aspirate as an unnecessary letter, "Avrel" is at once decided to be meant for Haverhill; and "Coffock," with the first letter softened, becomes the rustic spelling of Suffolk. Such peculiar instances of direction abound, and the address is generally re-written.

The wonderful handwriting and irregularity of the letters it is impossible to reproduce here, but the following are some of the puzzles with which the postal authorities have had to deal. "Bad ford Socar" is easily resolved into "Bedford-square," but here is one not so easy: the name is perfectly undecipherable, but the letter is addressed to some one at "Sagusha Carrcks, Secucks," solved as "Chichester Barracks, Sussex."

Next comes a letter to a young lady at "8 to Ledd And All Streat, London Sittay," which needs no explanation, unless the reader trips over the eighty-two. Here is the love-lorn maiden writing to her soldier lad, and, if one could have seen such a letter years ago, certainly it would have been sealed with a thimble—the address is "frist pertlan Wenant Bakes, london alsr-Were;" in other words—"First Battalion, Wellington Barracks, London, or elsewhere."

One gentleman is addressed as residing "Exsom, Norsomblom," for Hexham, Northumberland; another at "Ironfeathers," a good phonetic attempt at Higham Ferrers; and directly after one comes upon a letter sent to one in a "Youen infinery." Rather

a sad, low ebb in affairs to be in a union infirmary.

Names of recipients are all suppressed, otherwise it would be almost a feat to reproduce the first lines upon an envelope whose latter ones are "Hiva Box, Near Loue Green." However, the letter was safely delivered at Iver, Bucks. There was not much to guide the ear, and less for the eye, in the following—"Faration," especially when in the writing there is great doubt as to whether the first letter is F, J, or L. However, it was made out correctly to be Farringdon.

The scribe who wrote the next must have spent an hour with his up and down strokes—very up some of them, and very down some others—the result being, in large round hand—"Ish-kent, near Sanvige;"—"Ash, Kent, near Sandwich;" a cockney, the writer, no doubt. Rowley Regis, near Dudley, is rendered "Rowel and Readis," and the Isle of Wight "Aleright," with both of which there was a hint in the sound; but now we have one of a kind that would inevitably produce premature baldness in the clerks if they were frequent. Fancy "Sunstorbence" for your guide to some town or village: how long would you be before you made out that it was St. Albans?

"One" is rather a short-hand way of spelling "Olney;" but with "Bockingom shor" afterwards there is something of a clue to follow. Certainly it was a wonder, but the following found an owner at a suburban village: "tempel grove cottage, dear Mrs. Gurdner friday night." Surely this was enough to make a clerk "give it up." "Ner Lipocance" was a very good shot at "Liphook, Hants," rather better than "Rombesey near the gas works" for "Bermondsey," or "Serlyance At Sea" for "St. Leonards-on-Sea."

The friends of the defenders of our land do not shine at all in the graphies; here is a specimen:—"S F Gaucses 2 Batt Wigsudaw Borceau ad bks," rather a painful manner of expressing "Scots Fusilier Guards, Second Battalion, Windsor Barracks," especially when letters have to be guessed at, and the last word trails off into other nebulous letters to which the pen could not give form. Again, a military letter is addressed to Private So-and-so, at "Furdey C. I." Rather a bold stroke to express "Jersey, Channel Islands."

To return to the civilian element, here is

a letter for "Lankchire," and another for "Bouckemey Shear," the characters forming the last word twining and intertwining in hopeless confusion, like so many eels in a huckster's pail. "Shinerenester. With heaste" was no doubt delivered at Cirencester by the postman at a full trot, and gave as much pleasure as did this to another private, in "Scool of Goonery Rile Host Tillery, Showebry Excess." Letter after letter, whose quaintness is in the comical writing, and the peculiar arrangement of the lines; two or three have been written as if with the left hand, and read from right to left, the direction looking like lines of Eastern characters; and now again commence those whose peculiarity is in the spelling—"3 Pign 3ss3Z" was for a young lady at Epping, Essex, the name on the envelope being almost as much chopped up as the sausages of the famous little town. Another for Sydenham is condensed into "Sideom."

This next must be from "the young man who keeps company": "Eliza —, pruspect veller, fun Bridgewell," and it found its way to "Prospect Villas, Tunbridge Wells." There is "fun" in that, at least. Here is another St. Albans letter to a tradesman: "Mr. —, Fishmunger, Santal dants, upset ther taund pump, harf at Sheare." Doubtless the proximity to the town pump was handy, especially opposite; but let us hope it was not "upset."

The spelling seems to grow more wild as one proceeds, for here is "huper Olloy" for Upper Holloway; "fine Stitfird" is rather a poor introduction to Fenny Stratford; "Lattonbuddard" for Leighton Buzzard; and "Knt" or "Cant" for Kent; but nothing, save a sight of the fac-similes kept at the General Post Office, can give a fair idea of the peculiarity of the caligraphy, the confusion of loops and up and down strokes.

In the majority of instances, far from having full command over their pens, the writers seem to have been the slaves of the tiny implement, with the consequence that the nibs have run riot all over the envelope, from corner to corner and back again. Capitals make their appearance in the centre of words, and other words that have beginnings are without end. It is rare, though, that a letter is not sent to its rightful destination, for there are cool heads always busy over these Post Office puzzles.

IN THE DARK.

IN TWO CHAPTERS.—II.

DALLAS has been here a week. It is eight days and eight nights this morning since I first saw him—since the day we sat side by side at dinner, and he stared persistently at Laura Tremaine. He does not stare at her now. He seldom looks at, hardly ever speaks to her; and she avoids him with almost marked decision. I need not have been sulky that first evening; for ever since then he has devoted himself to me, not obtrusively, but with a sort of lazy, bien entendu attention—a half languid, half good-tempered readiness to gratify my little whims and pleasures, which is, I suppose, all that a muscular young man is capable of in the way of courtship in these used-up days. He has rowed me—all of us—on the river several times. He has ridden with me, and played croquet with me. He has even read aloud a little, and submitted to be read to—closing his eyes, however, and sleeping very sweetly and soundly during the latter enjoyment. John and Jane treat us exactly like engaged people. I suppose we are engaged; but somehow I thought he would have said something first. Perhaps he will; perhaps he is only waiting to know me a little better. He can't guess that I like him—that I haven't already fallen in love with some one else. He can't mean to let it be all "taken for granted." I have begun to puzzle a good bit over this; and to be—oh! so grateful for those three prompt rejections. Could I ever have worshipped any one as I do Dallas?

It is afternoon. A golden haze hangs over the farther bank of the river. Great blots of pink and scarlet petals relieve the flat, hot greenness of the close-shaven lawn. Clumps of overblown roses, masses of scorching scarlet geraniums, shake down fresh contributions of colour at every passing step or gentle breeze. Above, the sky is one vault of pure, dazzling blue. Below, the river is one sheet of dimpling, dancing silver flame. Only under one bank, where the trees hang out their broad, thick-leaved boughs, there is a band of shadow, dark, cool, and sharply defined against the blaze beyond. There our boat is lying, a heap of shawls and parasols in the stern, all ready for an outing. Dallas, looking more gloriously handsome than any old world Hyperion, in his boating flannels, is splicing one of the

tiller ropes. Laura and I, in huge shady hats and cool grass-cloth costumes, are standing on the bank, discussing which shall take a first turn at the assistant oar. Jane, a little higher up on the lawn, is trying to bribe Tommy to let go of her dress, and cease his ear-piercing howls to be allowed to accompany us. We are going to show Dallas the catacombs at Park-place.

Do you know what these catacombs are? If you have ever been at or in the vicinity of Henley-on-Thames you do, for they are one of the show places in the neighbourhood—if not, it is ten to one you have never heard of them; so I may as well mention that they are supposed to have been excavated by the Romans; that they are now the property of a gentleman residing in a pretty country house on the banks of the river; and that they tunnel, with as many multifarious windings as an ant's nest, one side of a hill in his domains. All visitors to Henley and Wargrave go to see them; and a gardener takes you in at one entrance and out at another, and receives unremonstratingly any donations you may choose to proffer to his acceptance.

This individual is beside us now, for we are all grouped round a rough doorway, much encumbered with brambles, and cut in the side of the hill. As he unlocks it, a faint fresh smell of apples issues from the darkness; specimens of that fruit being placed on jutting ledges of the rock, in order to enable one to "follow one's nose"—sight being out of the question. Jane and I are behind the guide. She is lamenting that she has got on a dark dress—it will be irretrievably ruined in those dark, dusty passages. Dallas and Laura have dropped a little behind. He seems to be speaking earnestly, and she is whitely, wofully pale. As I glance back at them, she comes hurriedly forward, and suggests that she should stay outside. She is tired; she has been there before, and—and— It is the first time I have ever seen Laura Tremaine agitated. Jane will not hear of leaving her. She will be nervous herself without Laura. There may be strange tourists about the grounds, and Laura would have to find her way alone down the hill.

Dallas turns round.

"You *must* come," he says, in deep, authoritative undertone.

And Laura yields. I glide on quickly after the guide. Huffed? Yes, decidedly huffed. Why should Laura obey *my* master?

We are all in thick darkness now. Our footsteps make no sound in the light, pulverous soil. I seem some way in advance, for Jane's voice, cheering on her eldest hope, comes to me dimly from the background. No one else speaks. There might be no one else in the catacombs; and the apples smell stronger than ever in the close, damp air. I can never bear the scent of an apple now. It makes me sick and shuddering in a moment.

Presently, quite close behind, there is a low, eager whisper, then a quick rustle, and some one—some one in grass-cloth like me—glides rapidly past me without a sound. The next moment there is a hand, a strong, stern hand, on my shoulder, and I hear the whisper again, in my ear this time.

"Why did you do that?" it says as angrily as is consistent with perfect lowliness. "Will it hurt you for me to speak to you this once?"

By "that" I suppose he means the involuntary start I give as his hand tightens on me. Instead of answering, I begin to tremble like a child. Has the moment for mutual avowals come at last?

"I *must* speak," Dallas says, in the same intensely earnest whisper, "and you must listen. Oh, my darling, forgive me. I cannot bear it any longer. I tried—God knows I tried, not to love you; to keep out of your way. It was you who came here voluntarily. Why did you? In Heaven's name, why did you, unless—"

He breaks off, and I can make no answer. I came—of course you know that from the first—that he might have an opportunity of settling that old arrangement; but I can hardly say as much. His hand glides from my shoulder to my waist. His voice goes on, persuasive now, with a perfect tenderness in it which I have never heard before—shall never, never hear again in this world or the next.

"My darling, my queen lily, I love you. You know I love you. I have nothing whatever but love to offer you while my father lives. It is the blindest, cruelest selfishness to try and lead you, who could marry a duke if you would, into utter poverty." (Poverty! and what of my hundred thousand pounds, and his good old place? His next words answer the last query.) "Haylands is fearfully, heavily mortgaged. My father had hard ado to keep it from old Jerningham, and I've

helped to encumber it with my extravagance. He can't cut me out of the entail; but if I refuse to marry as I am ordered, he can and will stop my present income, and turn me out of the house during his life. Laura, can you forgive me for first trying to win your love, when I knew it would be ruin for you; and then, too late, tearing myself away, and trying—trying with all my might—to sell myself to that little foolish thing and her money. Laura, I cannot. Worthless, mean, and extravagant as I am, I can't do that while there is even one chance that you would love me well enough to brave poverty at my side. Oh! my darling, tell me if it is so—tell me honestly; and I will leave here to-morrow, sell out, and slave day and night till I've earned some sort of a home for you. It may be long waiting, but if you love me, my beautiful sweet, if you only love me—" For one moment he pauses, with something like a gasp; then, with a sort of fierce desperation—"If not, I may as well go to the dogs, or marry that red-cheeked child, with all her chatter and gush. It would be much the same, as far as my happiness goes, once you were lost to me."

He has hurried out these words, one after another, with only that one pause, and then he finds no interruption. From the moment that he utters *her* name—the moment that it flashes on me that he is speaking to her, not me—all power of answer, or speech of any sort, has ebbed from me; and yet, oh, Dallas, Dallas! that I could ever have been so blindly, madly conceited as to dream of your caring for me when she was by! that the shattering of my dream should have driven every drop of warm life-blood in my body back to my heart, and made me reel and stagger so that, but for that supporting arm, I should have fallen down there at his feet, and betrayed the story of my own utter folly and weakness.

Thank God, he holds me too tightly for that! Thank God that, before he can speak again, Jane and Tommy are stumbling on us from behind! There could not be a better restorative. Dallas drops his arm as if shot, and turns to speak to her with more readiness than men in general show in such emergencies. I rush blindly on in the dark, knocking myself against sharp corners, slipping past Laura, and almost thrusting the guide against the wall

as I dash out into the great, glittering glare of yellow sunlight and green, green earth.

Where are "my red cheeks and chatter" now? Ah, reader, have not you known what it is to feel horribly, deathly pale; to know by intuition that you are whiter than any chalk marks on your dress? Laura is pale too. There is an expression of mingled fright, joy, and sorrow on her face, which only I understand. She attaches herself to Jane obstinately. I attach myself to Tommy, whom I do not favour in general; but anything rather than walk with Dallas—Dallas, who is not pale, but flushed with a sort of proud, happy audacity. Does not silence give consent? Little wonder his eyes rest with such open, daring tenderness on Laura's downcast face, all the livelong journey home.

We are there at last. I detect and thwart Dallas in an attempt at speaking to Miss Tremaine aside. She goes to her room. We below join in complaints of the heat, and abuse of the catacombs.

"So damp, so dirty."

"Daisy has not got back her colour yet."

"Of course not. Bad air always makes me pale. In the Metropolitan Underground I am positively ill—sick—as sick as I can be, always."

This in a sort of defiant reply to Dallas's mild look of disgust. He goes to his room, "to have a smoke," he says. I hear the key turn in the lock. It is a noisy key. I shall be sure to hear it when he unlocks it again; and Laura's room is at the other side of the house. I don't think they could meet without my knowing it, and I am determined they shall not—not till I am out of the house, and far, far away.

Unwilling to lose time, and in a miserable, feverish hurry, which will not let me rest, I open fire, directly we are alone, with—

"Cousin John, I am going away."

"Going away," he repeats, stupefied. "Where?"

"Back to Wales, to grandmamma; and to-morrow. Please don't say a word. Please don't, Jane—I *must* go."

"But why? What is the matter?" they both cry together, in utter amazement.

"Simply that I have made up my mind that I won't and can't marry Dallas Gale."

"Not—marry—Captain Gale!" repeats John, more astounded than ever. "Why,

I thought—we all thought—you were quite in—you liked him immensely."

"Nonsense, Daisy," Jane puts in, before I can speak. "This is some childish folly. You are jealous of Laura, you silly girl."

"Laura!" repeats John; "why he—she—they never speak—never—"

"Of course not," interrupts his wife. "Daisy, don't be foolish. Laura shall go away if you like. Indeed, her stepmother wants her back."

And Jane nods at me encouragingly. I burst out, in indignation—

"She shall not go away. Jane, how can you? I am not jealous of—of any one. I—I do not want to marry Dallas. I—I don't like him."

How loud we must have been talking! After all, I have not heard the key turn. As I turn round from uttering this tremendous lie, I see Dallas standing in the open doorway, his face pale with cold, haughty indignation and surprise.

We are all limp and gaping in conscious guilt. There is a dead silence. He breaks it first—

"I really beg your pardon for my interruption. The door being wide open, I did not know that you were engaged in a discussion which—"

His blue, beautiful eyes are blazing with utter scorn and wrath in my direction. He can hardly speak with anger; and yet I, who would have been frightened out of my life usually—I, whose cowardice is proverbial, am not afraid now. There are moments when one can dare anything, and this is one of them.

"Dallas," I say—somehow I have always called him by his Christian name—"don't be offended. I should have had to say it some time, and it is better now than later."

"*It?* Really, I hardly understand," he says, turning on me with barely veiled irony. "I was not aware that I had—"

"Asked me to marry you?" I interrupt, feverishly. "No, of course not; but as it was always arranged by our fathers, and was to come off before I was twenty, I thought I had better speak honestly before you liked me enough to ask me."

"Thank you," he says, satirically. "No one can complain of your frankness, Miss Jerningham, I am sure. The whole house could bear witness to it. Then I am to

understand you throw me over, and will have none of me."

Do what he will, a great, glad light is creeping over his face.

He forgets even poverty in joy at escaping from me.

"Yes," I say, firmly. "I am sorry about the property—you would have managed it better than I; but I can't help it, and you will have the codicil, anyhow."

"What codicil? Daisy, are you mad?" cries Jane, finding voice at last. "Captain Gayle, do not mind. She is not herself. It was the sun to-day—the bad air. She does not know what she is saying."

"Yes, Jane, I do," I answer, steadily. "He does not, and you don't; but when papa died he left a codicil in his will, to the effect that if I refused Dallas, he was to have five thousand pounds as a compensation for the disappointment. It is not much out of one hundred thousand pounds," I add, laughing a little bitterly, "but then it is unencumbered. It is all for yourself, and there is no *me* to be taken with it."

"My dear Daisy," sobs Jane, beginning to cry with vexation, "as if losing you were not worse than any other loss—than—"

"Miss Jerningham evidently puts 'mercenary' down among the list of my unlikeable qualities," observes Dallas, with stinging emphasis, which almost brings the tears into my eyes.

He need not be so cruel. In desperate fear of breaking down, I go up to him, both my hands outstretched in childish deprecation.

"Don't! Indeed, I never thought that. I do like you as a friend, but marriage is so different, and you cannot care much about me yet. I—I'm not very nice—not at all, I think."

The tears are very near the brim now; in another minute they will be over. For one moment his hands clasp mine; for one moment his eyes look down kindly on me. Because I am making him so happy, he will even forgive my impertinence.

"I think you nice," he says.

And then we both hear *her* step upon the stairs. I pull my hands away, and rush, without looking at her, away up to my own room, to howl at leisure over my packing.

I have never seen either of them since.

ONLY A YEAR.

CHAPTER VIII.

"CAN YOU GUESS WHAT HAS BEWITCHED ME TO SPEAK IN THIS WAY?"

"AND whatna sort o' party had ye last night?" inquired Miss Mason of her nephew at breakfast time.

"Very fair."

"Who was aw' there?"

"About sixteen or eighteen—not a very large party."

"I didn't ask how many. I want to know who they were."

"You wouldn't know their names could I remember them."

"Was Miss Kyriel there?"

"She was."

"Any o' her folk?"

"Her brother and sister, and another gentleman—a friend."

"And what was his name?"

"Brooke."

"Weel, and who else?—the Graingers?"

Thyrlle looked up.

"I knaw all about it, ye see. The two Misses Grainger ca'ed here a day or two since, and said that they and the Kyriels were going."

"The Miss Graingers called here, do you say?"

"Yes, wi' their pa."

"Why did you not let me know before?"

"I never thought on. What matter was it? And did ye see Hasson Grainger?"

Thyrlle drank a couple of glasses of his Clos de Vougeot, then rose.

"I think I have had enough of this catechism for the present. The next time people call here, please to let me know of it at once. I suppose you don't feel well enough to go the Manor House to-day?"

"Weel enough, say ye, when I'm aching all over, and my eyes and nose streamin' like fountains, and scarce able to bite or sup? Manor House, indeed! Odds cocks! It's little heed you wad tak o' me if I was lyin' dyin'."

Thyrlle made no remark, bit his moustache a little, and presently left the room.

Miss Mason, in spite of her assertion concerning her want of appetite, got through two or three slices of buttered toast, an egg, the leg of a chicken, and two cups of coffee, with tolerable ease. Having finished off with a bumper or two of claret, she settled

herself comfortably in an arm-chair by the fire.

"By jing!" she observed to herself, "she'll catch him. See if she won't. Every man who isn't a knave is a fule, and Archer was niver cut out to have anything anigh the brains o' his father—not that he's any saint forbye. He's the temper o' the deevil hissel', and I darrent ca' my soul my own when he lets it loose. Still, my sarty! I've nee mind that he sud marry. Where wad I be then? And, above aw, he shannet marry that cocket-up miss he brought here. I'll see if I cannit put a stopgap there. He's gone to see her to-day, mappan; and let him go. I'll go and see her some other day. Lord's sakes! I'm nin flayt o' the likes o' her. I'll stop it all somehow. What for sud I not, for it's nin to my noations? What a grand thing it is to hev a thinkin' mind!"

With this consolatory reflection her soliloquy ceased, and she went about her household avocations, which consisted to a great degree in appropriating as much as she could of the money Thyrlé placed at her disposal for household use; but about the spending of which he was never inquisitive.

The wintry sun was doing his best to be cheerful, when, about three o'clock that afternoon, Thyrlé rode slowly down the Cross Roads Hill. Little did he think who was watching him, or imagine the blush of pleasure that covered the cheeks of Phillis Kyriel as she saw him coming. About ten minutes later he was ushered into a pretty little boudoir, where Phillis was lounging back in an easy-chair, with a book in her hand. She rose, and met him with a frank smile and an offered hand.

"I half hoped you would not come to-day," she began—(oh, Phillis!)—"as my brother and sister were both obliged to go away on a long-promised expedition to Denfrew Abbey. Do you know the abbey? Such a beautiful old place!"

Phillis was a little suspicious and watchful of the *manière d'agir* of the ironmaster's son, but she could detect not the slightest change from that of the first day she had met him. He took a chair near her, and replied to her without a tinge of the *gaucherie* or want of ease she rather looked for. He was, perhaps, more self-possessed, in a quiet, unassuming way, than even most Englishmen. Phillis went on—

"Poor mamma is a sad invalid; she suffers dreadfully from neuralgia, and she is seldom

downstairs before evening—sometimes, indeed, keeps her room all day. So you will have to content yourself with only me."

"Only?" he repeated, with a smile.

"What amuses you?" she asked.

"Only that, I should say, 'only' you are about as much as one man's intellect can manage."

"I don't set up for being intellectual."

"I never accused you of such a thing."

Miss Kyriel coloured.

"Yet I shouldn't like you to think me a dunce," she said, and raised her eyes to his, finding an amused expression there which puzzled her.

There was a subtle flattery in her last little speech which he at once detected.

"You are not serious," he replied. "You don't really care for what such a 'vulgar, uneducated' fellow——"

"Oh, don't!" she interrupted, her colour rising. "You are very unforgiving, Mr. Thyrlé. Will you never forget that unhappy speech of mine?"

"It was forgiven the moment after you uttered it; but you can't expect me to be so rude as to forget anything Miss Kyriel says to me."

"I still think you are very unforgiving."

"Tell me in what way."

"Did you not give me to understand that Mr. Hasson Grainger had in some way injured you?"

Again she saw the dark, troubled look she had noticed before, sweep across Thyrlé's face.

"I would rather you did not mention him. Any other subject is pleasanter to me."

"Nay, do not be angry. I did not mean to vex you so."

"I am vexed, certainly, at so continually coming across this man and his name. To be angry is another thing altogether. But may I ask why you take this interest in Mr. Grainger? Why do you appeal to me on this subject?"

"Mr. Grainger is an old friend of mine," she said, lightly, "and you are a new one. My ambition was to make peace between you."

He bestowed on her a glance of admiration, which she felt she did not merit; her chief object being, if possible, to gain some way to Thyrlé's confidence.

"But why do you not ask Mr. Grainger to forgive me?" inquired Thyrlé.

She looked at him a little anxiously.

"You have never done him any wrong?" she questioned.

"I have done what a nature like his will never pardon," was the stern reply. "I forgave him, as I hope to be forgiven. My only desire concerning him was that I might never see his face again; but it seems as though I cannot avoid him. I hate to look at him, to hear his voice, or hear his name; for it brings back to me a time of sorrow caused by him, and hard, bad thoughts into my heart. He seems to be a friend of yours, Miss Kyriel; and you are perfectly at liberty to tell him the very words I have used—they are but what he well knows already."

Had he been more deeply learned in the ways and looks of women than he was, he might have traced not only unfeigned interest, but real admiration, in Miss Kyriel's eloquent eyes.

But he said to himself, with a sneer at his own credulity—

"Grainger is poor, and I am rich. She may think me worth an hour's flirtation."

Yet, in spite of himself, he was charmed. She led him on to talk a little of his travels, and her observations and questions proved to him that she was indeed "no dunce;" that she had not fallen into the common error of thinking that a beautiful woman requires no education. They came round by degrees to speak of London, and then Thyrlé observed, smiling—

"I have already received a verbal invitation to Sir George Rose's ball on the 14th. He told me last night that the invitations would be sent out very soon, and said he hoped I would not go to town before it."

"You will stay for it, won't you?" said Miss Kyriel.

"I think so—indeed, you know I am under an obligation to do so, if only to claim the first waltz and the first galop."

She smiled, and did not deny the claim.

"Do you know," he said presently, "I admired your sister very much last night, she has such a good look in her face. I thought her altogether the most charming-looking girl I have seen since I came to England."

Poor Kittie, she little guessed that much of her future life would turn on such chance words as these!

"I will tell her so, Mr. Thyrlé," returned Phillis, pleasantly. "She is as good as she

looks. I wish I were ever one-half as good as she always is."

"I should have thought that you were always good too."

"No—I have not at all a good temper, and a great many things try it."

"It appears to me almost incredible that in the pleasant, easy life you young ladies lead, anything need ruffle you."

"How thoroughly a man's reasoning that is!" exclaimed Phillis. "Men, I suppose, with larger aims and so much greater things to occupy their minds, cannot imagine what a woman may be forced to endure, not only in silence, but, far worse, in dulness. One day the same as the last—ever the same faces, the same places—the endless monotony of a stagnant life. You, and men like you, can at least make an effort to obliterate sad memories by work or travel; but I, and women like me, have to fight with them hand to hand, with no notion of how to better occupy our thoughts and brains—with no hope of escape, no chance of improvement."

She stopped suddenly, finding she had forgotten herself in her subject, and had spoken passionately, as she felt. She added, quickly, with a laugh, half bitter, half ironical, while the expression of her face changed as much as her tone—

"Does this give you any insight into the 'pleasant, unruffled life of a young lady'?"

He answered, gravely—

"I hardly know if you are speaking seriously or not. You are too young to have known much of any kind of mental suffering—"

She interrupted him.

"At what age, pray, do we begin our mental sufferings? Don't you know how much sooner girls are women than boys are men? And how old do you suppose I am?"

He smiled at the abrupt question.

"From your mode of thinking, I should say you were thirty or forty; from your appearance, nineteen or twenty."

"That is just what I mean!" she exclaimed. "A boy of nineteen or twenty is scarcely beyond the delights of cricket and fireworks; a girl of the same age suffers then as she never will or can again in her life. I am twenty-three, Mr. Thyrlé, and I began my troubles when I was eighteen."

His voice and his eyes were softer than usual when he replied—

"But you have forgotten them—you are happy again now?"

"Yes; and what do you think cured me?"

Her tone was mocking derision of herself. "The Roses, my kind friends, saw me pining—breaking my heart in an orthodox manner, and took me up to London to introduce me along with one of their daughters. The fun and excitement of a season did me a world of good; and I am, as you see, all right again."

"The strangest, most beautiful, most capricious creature I ever met," thought Thyrlé; for her face, which had been stern, passionate, and sarcastic by turns, was now wreathed with smiles as bright and happy as a child's.

"Can you guess," she continued, "what has bewitched me to speak in this way—as I never spoke before in my life—to you, almost a stranger?"

Thyrlé shook his head.

"Your own words," she said, with quick-lighting eyes. "What you told me just now—words which seemed the very echo of those I have spoken in my own heart again and again. You said, 'I forgave him as I hope to be forgiven. My great desire was that I might never see his face again; but he seems to pursue me. I hate to see or to hear him, for he brings back to me my time of sorrow caused by him, and hard, bitter thoughts into my mind.' However Mr. Grainger has injured you, he has equally injured me, for your thoughts about him are mine."

Thyrlé was silent with surprise. It was impossible for him to doubt her sincerity. If ever the mouth spoke from the fulness of the heart, hers did then. He pondered a few moments, his eyes upon the floor. Then he said—

"But if this is so—if you have one-half of the detestation of Grainger which I have, in what way do you account for—for the manner you allowed him to assume last night?"

A hot blush swept across her face.

"I don't know if I can quite explain myself to you," she said; "but I am too proud to let him think it possible that any wrong he can have done could in any way be of sufficient consequence for me to trouble to alter our old degree of intimacy. And we have known each other so well all our lives until within the last few years."

"He must be too old to have been much of a playmate for you," remarked Thyrlé.

"He is only a year or two younger than I am; he must be seven or eight and twenty."

"Yes, he is twenty-eight. But that made no difference. He is about Gilfred's age, and the girls are nearly the same as Kittie and myself. So the two big boys used to help and protect us."

"You have not yet asked me for your reward for finding my old locket," he said, rising to take leave.

She had seen that it was in its former place again; and she made an effort to speak her request, but failed.

"I don't know you well enough yet," she said; "but some time I shall ask you. I am not likely to forget."

And as he rode away he was perplexed beyond measure by the peculiar beauty and the strange confidences of Phillis Kyriel. A vainer man might have imagined he had made a conquest. One less shrewd and observant might have thought all she had said merely good acting to make an impression on a man of fortune. Thyrlé himself came to the conclusion that she had *not* forgiven Grainger, and hoped, through Thyrlé, to in some way avenge herself. And, for once, all such surmises were wrong. Phillis Kyriel's nature—self-contained and haughty though it usually was—had overleapt the barrier, and displayed itself. Could Thyrlé but have looked back into that room ten minutes later, he would have seen the proud head of the beauty drooping low and piteously in a flood of bitter weeping. The old wound had been opened for the moment, and the anguish was intolerable.

It was not that she loved Grainger now, or even regretted him; but passionately she mourned for the bright, happy girlhood he had darkened, the one good, gentle nature which, in its desperation at his perfidy, changed its course, and became impetuous, fickle, disdainful—above all, indescribably sad. And as her tears slowly dried, she remembered, with the heart-breaking regret which we only can feel for the past and gone, what a happy, light-hearted girl used to steal down to the orchard gate in the sweet spring evenings long, long ago; how gaily her heart beat when she saw her handsome lover awaiting her under the pink hawthorn tree.

"Nothing is changed but ourselves," she moaned. "The orchard and the thorn tree

are still there, and the spring evenings come again and again; but I—I, as I was then, am as utterly gone as if I had been dead and buried a hundred years. 'The tender grace of a day that is dead can never come back to me.'"

She little suspected that this very regret for her old self was a softening of her nature—that she more nearly approached resembling the glad girl in the orchard that afternoon than she had for years.

Presently came the distant sound of wheels, then gay voices and laughter in the hall; and Phillis cleared her brow to go and welcome the carriage-load back.

Grainger was not with them.

"He remembered in Hallingford that he had some calls to make," explained Grace; "so he left us there. And did you have Mr. Thyrlle here? Because we met him just on this side of Hallingford; but he didn't seem to know any of us."

"He could not have recognized you," returned Phillis; "for he has been here, but he did not say he had met you."

THE CASUAL OBSERVER.

AT A FIRE APRON FACTORY.

"REG'LAR workshops for it? Well, there may be, but we always makes ourn at home. Clear that there chair, missus, and let the gentleman sit down."

A gum pot and some paper shavings were swept from a rickety chair, of that regal old make known as Windsor, by a rather cross-looking woman, who seemed to resent the visit; while a thin, lathy-looking girl stared and sniffed as she sat at a table covered with coloured tissue paper. Against the wall, and over the bed which asserted itself very prominently in the sordid two-pair back in Clerkenwell, were gaudy fire aprons, which rustled and moved in the wind that crept in through ill-fitting door and window.

The husband, though, was disposed to be chatty; and rolling his shirt sleeves a little higher, he took up a sheet of tissue paper and a pair of scissors as if to continue his task, but only to wave them about as he pointed to the barely-furnished room.

"There," he said, "I'll tell you how we make 'em. I aint afraid of yer takin' up with the trade to live like this here. It's an honest trade, though, and comes in its turn, when there aint nothing better to do. Look

here, you know, there's the thin shavings, all curly like, with a bit or two o' gold paper in them, we buys, and so we does the horn shavings and gelatiny things; but these here fire aperns we makes like this of a evening, and goes out and sells 'em next morning; and cust things they is if it blows hard—rags 'em to pieces, it does, or spoils 'em if it rains. My missus has come home real savage at times about the weather. For, you see, weather has a deal to do with our trade; and if it aint fine, people won't leave off their fires; and if they won't leave off their fires, they won't buy ornyments for their fire-stoves.

"This here's what we makes 'em off; this is what we calls 'backs'" (a quire of whitey-brown paper produced from the deal table drawer). "This is like for a foundation to build on, and stick the tisher paper on. Tisher paper costs, white, fourpence or sixpence a quire; and coloured—greens, and yellows, and blues—ninepence to a shilling, according to where you are. I've give a shilling for it in the country; ah! and as much as fourteen-pence for pink often. You see, pink's our best colour, and varies very much. English pink's very poor stuff; but French pink's bright and nice, and cuts up into roses as look well on a apern. We aint any reg'lar way of making the things; but every year I tries to smoke out o' my pipe a fresh pattern, something noo, you know, and when I can I get first start, and sits up late to get all I can done and sold before some one else imitates it; for, you see, there's lots o' idle vagabonds as'll wait till I've invented a good pattern, and they'll go and make lots like it, and sell 'em all over London. That's one of my nooest." (A large pink and white affair, like the back of a lady's dress, en panier pointed out.) "Them roses sets it off, don't they? Now, you see them frills and scollops, they're easy enough to make when you know how. Look here; we cut half a dozen sheets of white tisher into strips, and folds 'em backwards and forwards very even; then lays 'em on this piece o' lead, puts this pinking iron on, gives a few taps of the hammer, and there you are. When you open 'em out, dozens o' paper frills with scoloped edges. Then some of 'em we makes with the scissors; some we makes into fringes, all by cutting, and ruching, and carefully folding—for a deal depends on the folding. Some, again, we stamps out with these other irons, so as

to make holes, and diamonds, and stars, and 'alf moons. Only put plenty of thick-nesses of paper together, and there you have them, when you shake them out, all as ornamental as can be.

"Pass that gum pot over, Louy. That's the style. Now, you see, I stick a lot of white tisher fringes on the back; one here and another there. Now two or three frills like that. What's that bit o' lath for? Oh, that's gummed to the top of the back paper, so as to make all strong, to hang 'em up by. I shall put a bit o' string in round the lath. Now then, you see, we stick on some yellow frills and some of these green lengths all puckered up, with the stamped edges. Looks good enough now, don't it? Ah, to be sure; but it won't do yet—the public's been too much spoiled by competition, and one fellow underselling another. We have to give something handsomer every year. Last year it was strips of gold and silver paper; this year I'm going to do my best ones with gold roses and silver leaves, just in the centre, where, a year or two ago, I had flower baskets with a twisted handle, and them all full of roses. That was a pretty idea, that was, and took well while it was noo; but it was soon overdone.

"Now, you see, I shall put some long lengths of stamped-out paper hanging here from top to bottom, so as to give a light, brisk look to the apern; and where the lengths are stuck on, one puts pink roses, just twisted apart of the paper—don't take long, you see, and they set all off wonderful. Now, then, too, a yellow rose or two, and some green leaves, and there you are, as good-looking an ornymant as you can well see, and fit for anybody's grate. Cost just about twopence, and we shall get a shilling for it if we can; if not, ninepence, or sixpence, rather than lose a customer; for times are hard enough, and one way and another, there's plenty of work in a fire-paper; and when you've spent all your money sometimes in tisher to work up, and have worked all up, it comes in a black, east wind, and snow and hail, and you can't sell a apern. Even at the best of times, look at the long miles one has to tramp over the pavement to find customers, and then have to come back, most worn out, to set to and make more. But, as I said before, sir, it comes in at its proper season, and one does one's best. We aint starved yet, and we aint had to get help from the parish, only that once

when we tried the country, and Louy there broke down and was ill. Bad job that was; for her fingers are light and quick, and she can handle the paper better than me or the missus.

"Won't take one with you to-night, I s'pose, sir? No, of course not, 'taint a thing you'd like to carry through the street. Mind the mat, sir. You've seen how it's done, all but the gold leaf work; but 'taint hard to see how that comes on. Won't take one? No? Only let us have fine weather, sir, and you'd be welcome to the lot."

ANGUISH IN PRINT.

IN THE STRICTEST CONFIDENCE.

TEAR THE EIGHTH.

WICKEDNESS AND MISERY.

IN spite of my feeling the time to be a dreadful drag, somehow or another it slipped away; though I shudder now when I recall that during that lapse of time I was growing more and more wicked every day; and matters were slowly progressing towards the dire hour when my happiness was wrecked for ever—buoyant bark though it was—upon the shoals and quicksands surrounding the fair land of love and joy.

It would, perhaps, look particular, or I would repeat that last musical sentence, which seems to describe so aptly my feelings. But to resume. One could not help liking French, though, when one had such a teacher; and, oh, how I used to work to get my exercises perfect! Clara used to laugh and tease, but then I could fight her with her own weapons. I did not mind her beginning to say the verb "aimer," because I always used to retaliate with something Italian, and she was beaten directly; for any one with half an eye could see why she was so fond of that especial subject.

How the monster with the short, crisp beard used to stare at me! just as he did at the very first, when mamma was with me; and for a long time I used to fancy that every teacher and pupil must see how his eyes were directed at me, though I suppose really there was nothing for any one to see. But, oh, what a battle I used to have when lessons were over, and I had settled down into a quiet, dreamy way. Then used to come the face of Mr. St. Purre, the curate in town, to look at me reproachfully, so sadly that I used to have many a good cry; and I

hardly knew how to bear it. And certainly, before I left London, I used to think a great deal of Mr. St. Purre; and I'm sure no young lady was more regular at church than I was. I was there every morning at eight, at the prayers, when really it was such a job in the cold weather to get up and dressed—nicely dressed—in time. Then, I never missed one Wednesday or Friday, nor a saint's day; and as to Sundays, I went three times as a matter of course. While papa was wicked enough to say that so much going to church did not constitute true religion, and he did not believe in it. Wasn't it shocking? I did ask myself once, though, whether I should have gone so often if there had been a different curate.

I must own that I certainly did think a great deal of Mr. St. Purre before I left London, as I said before; but then it was not my wish to leave—I was forced away, and I had not dreamed of the noble exile then: the tender chords of sympathy for others' sorrows had not then been touched. I had not learned to pity one who was driven by a cruel tyrant from home and estate to gain his bread upon a cold shore by imparting the "*langue douce*" of his "*chère patrie*." I had not then seen the stern but handsome refugee—so handsome as, after all, I am compelled to think him; so interesting even in the little errors of pronunciation of our tongue. I always thought French a great bother until I heard him speak it, and then I grew to quite idolize the bright, sparkling tongue. Shakspeare was, of course, soon banished to make way for Molière; while, after reading to him, Monsieur Achille would perhaps say a few words of praise, every one of which would make my face tingle so that I felt red right up to the roots of my hair.

But the Cedars was, after all, a dreadfully tiresome place, and seemed made up of aggravation. What was the use of having a lawn for croquet, with the hoops all so ostentatiously displayed, as if the young ladies could always enjoy a little recreation there, when, so sure as one had a mallet in hand and a foot was pressed down upon a ball, squeak, screech, or croak came the voice of Miss Furness, Miss Sloman, or the Fraulein, to announce some new lesson, when, of course, we had to go in? I declare if I did not, over and over again, say that vulgar, wicked word that I had learned of papa, and tried so hard to break myself

of, though it seemed of not the slightest use, and the more I tried the more it would keep poking itself into my mind—I declare if I did not, over and over again, say "Jigger the lessons!"

I used to get up every morning sighing and declaring that I would not stay, till I took hold of the books to get ready my French exercises, when somehow I used to get into a better frame of mind; for they seemed to cheer me up, and render the place a little less distasteful. I know very well now that my conduct afterwards was very sad, and that I can offer no defence; but when there is any scandal, and things that were untrue have been said, of course I feel bound to speak up; and, whether out of place or not, I mean to say here that, whether it was to tease me, or whether she meant it, all that Clara hinted was untrue.

I never once wrote Monsieur Achille's name upon the blotting paper, for I would not have been guilty of such bold, outrageous conduct; but the tiresome creature would persist in saying that I did, and, as a matter of course, it was of no use to try and stop her. But I could not help feeling how shocking it was, and how wrong for Monsieur Achille to take advantage of his position as a teacher to behave as he did. He must have been very badly taught himself; and yet it did seem so sweet when one was banished in this way from home, joined to him, as it were, by those before-mentioned chords of sympathy—to him, another exile from home; and it was such nonsense to say Mrs. Blunt's establishment embraced all the comforts of a home, when one never saw a single comfort: if it did, they must have been embraced so tightly that they were all smothered—it seemed so sweet to have one to take an interest in every word and look, as Monsieur Achille soon showed that he did. And we had no pets—neither bird nor dog; and what could I do but set to loving something?

I may be wrong, but it seems to me only natural that we should have something on which to bestow our love; and if that is taken away upon which one wishes to bestow it, why it must gush over upon some other object. Of course, I loved Clara; but, then, she loved something else, and one did not get a fair exchange for one's affection; and I wanted a great deal of devotion to comfort me then, and make up for what I was suffering. So

at last, giving way the least, little, tiniest morsel at a time, I began to feel that I should some day love Monsieur Achille very passionately; and—oh, how wicked!—I was first quite sure of it at church one Sunday, when that dreadful curate was preaching at the old vicar, and Orthodoxy and Heterodoxy were saying it over to themselves with their eyes shut, and one's heart was out in the green fields and woods and far away, and as wicked as a heart can be.

Oh, yes, wicked—wicked—wicked as could be—dreadfully wicked! But it was all mamma's fault. I had many a good cry about it, but I could not help it all; and it did seem such a relief, after walking two and two to church together, like little girls—it did seem such a relief to have some one in the building who did not look upon one as a child. For there *he* used to sit, Sunday after Sunday, behaving so hypocritically, for all the while he was a Roman Catholic; only he came to church to please Mrs. Blunt, though I sometimes fancy it was to please himself as well. But it was upon this one Sunday that I seemed to notice it so particularly. Just for want of something better to do, I suppose, I had been taking the greatest of pains with myself; and I must have looked nice, or else Clara would not have stood and clapped her hands when I was ready; and then we went off, and no sooner were we well outside the great iron gates than there just before us we could see Monsieur Achille and the Signor, arm in arm, going towards the church, and having evidently just before been taking a walk in the bright, free, green fields from which I was prisoned. I saw them look very hard towards us when they turned round, and Clara whispered that she knew why they had come, and where they were going; for previous to this, I suppose, they had very seldom been in the church—at least, we had never hardly seen them.

But it was plain enough where they were going, for they went in just before us; and as they stood in the porch waiting for the pew-opener, the Signor commenced crossing himself just as if it were a Roman Catholic chapel; when I saw Monsieur Achille pinch his arm and whisper something, so that he dropped his hand to his side and looked quite horrified. Then I saw Monsieur Achille whisper to the pew-opener, when they disappeared within the great

swing, red-baize doors, and we went upstairs to fill the long pews in the gallery.

It was only natural that we should look round the church after being comfortably seated, when there, in one of the sideway seats, were the two masters, casting an eye up towards us every now and then, and looking so hard that I felt quite ashamed, and was afraid it would be observed; but I soon remembered that our three Graces were sitting in the pew behind, and I know they felt sure that the glances were directed at them. Poor things! And then it was that I had that thought come into my head, forcing its way in as if to make its abode there, although I shut my eyes tightly, and determined not to think of anything of the kind. People take opiates for pains bodily; but why, oh! why do not Savory and Moore, or Godfrey and Cooke, or somebody or another bring out an opiate for pains mental? What would I not have given that day to have lulled the excitement of my feelings, and to have attended quietly to my duties as I ought?

Tiresome, tiresome, tiresome!—oh, how tiresome it was, day after day, to go back to all the old school ways and habits—writing exercises, learning lessons, saying them, and being corrected and snubbed; heard to read, and one's emphasis here, there, and everywhere found fault with, when I'm sure I read far better than those who heard me. Then my writing was not in accordance with Mrs. Blunt's ideas of penmanship.

There were no novels to read; no *Times*, with its own mysterious advertisements, that seem to mean such a deal; no morning concerts, no walks or rides—only exercise, two and two, as walking advertisements of the Cedars. I declare at last, in spite of the French lessons—or perhaps partly owing to the whirl within me, and the dreadfully worried state I was in—I grew quite low-spirited, and could not eat, and used to sit and mope, and I could see that I was getting paler and paler every day.

This sort of thing, though, would not do for Mrs. Blunt, who saw in it the probable loss of a pupil and plenty of pounds a year; and one morning there was a summons for me to go into the drawing-room, where I found Mrs. Blunt and a gentleman in black—so prim, so white-handkerchiefed and gold-sealed! All his grey hair was brushed up into a point, like an ice mountain on the

top of his head; while, whenever he spoke, his words came rolling out like great sugar-coated pills—so soft, so sweet, so smooth, you might have taken him for a great mechanical bon-bon box, and the hand he gently waved for the spring that set him in motion. I knew well enough that he was a doctor, as soon as I went in, and that he had been sent for to see me.

"Miss Bozerne, Dr. Boole," said Mrs. Blunt.

And then, after ever so much bowing and saluting, there was the horrid old wretch, screwing his face up, and wagging his head, and peeping at me out of his half-shut eyes, as he felt my pulse and told me to put out my tongue; while directly after he drew in a long breath and pinched his lips together, as if he knew all about my complaint, and could see through it in a moment. But he did not know that I was mentally delivering him a homily upon hypocrisy, of which dreadful stuff it seemed to me there was an abundance at Allsham, it being about the place like an epidemic—or I suppose I ought to say it was in the place like an epidemic. And I must confess I had caught the complaint very badly, though Dr. Boole was no use for that, seeing that he could not cure himself. Oh! if everybody troubled with hypocrisy would only call in the doctor, what a fortune each medical man would soon make!

Well, the doctor left hold of my wrist, after putting it down gently, as if it were something breakable, and put his gold eyeglasses up for another inspection.

"Was not my appetite rather failing? Did I not feel a strong inclination to sigh? Did I not feel low-spirited, and wake of a morning unrefreshed?"

Why, of course I did. And so would any one who had been treated as I had, and so I felt disposed to tell him; but it would have been of little use. So I let them say and think what they liked; and when the interview was over, the doctor rose and rolled out of the room, bowing in a way that must have delighted Mrs. Blunt's ideas of deportment; while he had written something upon a half-sheet of note paper, and left orders that the prescription should be immediately made up.

"Of course," said Mrs. Blunt, "I shall write to your dear mamma by the next post, Miss Bozerne; but she need be under no concern, for the cares of a home will be

bestowed upon you. And now you had better return to the pursuance of your course of studies."

I took the extremely polite hint; but I did not take the medicine when it was sent in. What did I want with medicine? Why, it was absurd. I used to pour it out into the glass, and then take it to the open window and throw it as far out as I could, so as to make a shower of fine physic fall upon the grass and pathway—such small drops that no one could see it had been thrown out. And, after all, I'm sure it was only a little bitter water, coloured and scented, and labelled to look important.

At the doctor's next visit I was horribly afraid that he would ask me whether I had taken the medicine; and sure enough he did, only Mrs. Blunt directly said "Yes," and he was satisfied, and said I was much better, though he did not quite like my flushed, feverish-looking face. So he wrote another prescription for that, when I was only colouring up on account of being asked about the medicine.

TEAR THE NINTH.

THREE-CORNERED.

DR. BOOLE had pronounced me to be decidedly better, and had been and gone for the last time, while I felt quite sorry as I thought of the expense, and of how it would figure in the account along with the books and extras. The doctor had rubbed his hands and smiled, and congratulated me upon my improved looks and rapid return to health. And really I did feel decidedly better, though it was not his doing; and if any prescription at all had done me good, it was a tiny one written in French. And now, somehow, I did seem to find the Cedars a little more bearable, and my spirits were brighter and better; but not one drop of the odious medicine had I taken.

Clara had more than once seen me throw it away, and had said "Oh!" and "My!" and "What a shame!" but I had thrown it away all the same, except twice or three times when I got Patty Smith to take it for me, which she did willingly, upon my promising to do her exercises; and I really believe she would have taken quarts of the odious stuff on the same conditions, for she could eat and drink almost anything, and I believe that she was all digestive apparatus instead of brains. Pasty wasters, fat, sour

gooseberries, vinegar pippins, it was all the same to her; and she used to be always having great dry seed cakes sent to her from home, to sit voraciously devouring at night when we went to bed; and then out of generosity, when I had helped her with her exercises—which I often did as I grew more contented—she would cut me off wedges of the nasty, branny stuff with her scissors, which was a lucky thing for the sparrows, who used to feast upon seed cake crumbs from morning to night, for I never ate any.

And now I began to pay more attention to the lessons: singing with the Signor or the Fraulein, who had one of the most croaky voices I ever heard, though she was certainly a most brilliant pianiste. Her name was Gretchen, but we used to call her Clarionette, for that seemed to suit best with her horrid, reedy, croaky voice. Then, too, I used to practise hard with my instrumental music; but such a jangly piano we had for practice, though there was a splendid Collard in the drawing-room that it was quite a treat to touch. But only fancy working up Brinley Richards, or Vincent Wallace, or Czerny upon a horrible skeleton-keyed piano that would rattle like old bones, while it was always out of tune, had a dumb note somewhere, and was not even of full compass. Then I tried hard to take to the dancing, and poor little Monsieur de Kittville—droll little man!—who always seemed to have two more arms than belonged to him; and there they were, tight in his coat sleeves, and hung out, one on each side, as if he did not know where to put them; and he a master of deportment!

I had quite taken a turn now, and was trying to bear it all, and put up with everything as well as I could, even with the horribly regular meals which we used to sit down to at a table where all the knives and forks were cripples—some loose in their handles, some were cracked, some were bent, and others looking over their shoulders. One horrid thing came out one day, and peppered my dinner with rosiny dust; and there it was—a fork—sticking upright in a piece of tough stewed steak, although two of the prongs were bent; and when some of the girls tittered, Miss Furness said that I ought to have known better, and that such behaviour was most unladylike and unbecoming.

But there, she was naturally an unpleasant,

crabby old thing, and never hardly opened her lips to speak without saying words that were all crooked and full of corners. She once told Celia Blang—the pupil she petted, and who used to tell her tales—that she used to be considered very handsome, and was called the “flower of the village;” but if she was, they must have meant the flower of the vinegar plant—for it is impossible to conceive a more acid old creature. In church, too, it was enough to make one turn round and slap her; for if she did not copy from the vicar, and take to repeating the responses out so terribly loud, and before the officiating priest, so as to make believe how devout she was, when it really seemed to me that it was only to make herself conspicuous. And then, to see the way in which the vain old thing used to dress her thin, straggly hair! I do not laugh at people because their hair is not luxuriant or is turning grey, but at their vanity, which I am sure deserves it; and anybody is welcome to laugh at mine. As for Miss Furness’s hair, there was a bit of false here and another bit there, and so different in shade and texture to her own that it was quite shocking to see how artificial she looked; while, to make matters ten times worse, she could not wear her hair plain, but in that old-fashioned Eugenie style, stretching the skin of her face out so tightly that her red nose shone, and she was continually on the grin. And yet I’ve caught her standing before the glass in the drawing-room, to simper and smile at herself, as if she were a goddess of beauty.

As of course you know, South Sea Island gum mops had gone out then, and chignons were just in vogue; when, of course, she must be in the fashion, and the Eugenie style was dismissed to make way for a great pad; when, very soon, her light silk dress was all over pomatumy marks between the shoulders, though she rubbed it well with bread crumbs every night. I was so annoyed that I threw mine off in disgust; for who could wear a chignon, and be imitated by such a creature? I curled my hair all round, and next day wore it hanging in ringlets; and this was the day upon which I received the prescription written in French, which did me so much good. It was French lesson day, and while my exercise was being corrected and I was trying to translate, I felt something pressed into my hand; and somehow or another—though I knew how

horribly wicked it was—I had not the heart to refuse it, but blushed, and trembled, and stood there with my face suffused, blundering through the translation, until the lesson was ended, and, without daring to look at the giver, I could rush upstairs and devour those two or three lines hastily scribbled upon a piece of exercise paper.

No! never, never, never will I divulge what they were! Enough that I say how they made my cheeks burn, my heart throb, and the whole place turn into an abode of bliss. Why, I could have kissed Mrs. Blunt and all the teachers that evening; and when, at tea time, as I sat thoughtful and almost happy—I think that I was quite happy for a little while—Miss Furness said something spiteful and cross, I really don't think I minded it a bit.

It did not last long, that very bright colour medium; but there was something of it henceforth to make lessons easy, and the time to pass less dolefully. I did not answer the first note, nor the second, nor yet the third; but I suppose he must have seen that I was not displeased, or he would not have written so many times; but at last I did dare to give him a look, which brought note after note for me to devour again and again in solitude. I quite tremble now I write, when I think of the daring I displayed in receiving them; but I was brave then, and exultant over my conquest in holding for slave that noble-looking French refugee, whose private history must, I felt, be such a romance, that I quite felt to grow taller with importance.

Every note I received was written in his own sweet, sparkling, champagne-like language; and, oh! what progress I made in the tongue, though I am afraid I did not deserve all the praise he bestowed upon me.

Times and times he used to pray for an interview, that I would meet him somewhere—anywhere; but of course I could not yield to any such request, but told him to be content with the replies I gave him to his notes. But still, plan after plan he would propose, and all of them so dreadfully imprudent, and wild, and chivalrous, that nothing could be like it. I know that he would have been a knight or a cavalier had he lived earlier; while as to his looks!—ah, me! I fear that there must be truth in mesmerism, for I felt from the first that he had some terrible power over me, and could—

what shall I say?—there, I cannot think of a better simile—turn me, as it were, round his finger; and that is really not an elegant expression. But there, he was so calm, so pensive-looking, and noble, that he might have been taken for one of Byron's heroes—Lara, or Manfred, or the Giaour. Either or all of these must have been exactly like him; while to find out that I, Laura Bozerne, was the sole object of his worship—ah! it was thrilling.

I do not know how the time went then, for to me there seemed to be only one measurement, and that was the space between Monsieur Achille's lessons. As to the scoldings that I was constantly receiving, I did not heed them now in the least; for my being was filled by one sole thought, while the shadowy, reproachful face of Mr. St. Purre grew more faint day by day. It must have been weeks—I cannot tell; months, perhaps—after my entrance as pupil at the Cedars that I retired on some excuse one afternoon to my dormitory, with a little, sharp, three-cornered note, and tremblingly anxious I tore it open, and read its contents.

And those contents? I would not even hint at them, if it were not that they are so necessary to the progress of my confessions.

He said that he had implored me again and again to meet him, and yet I was relentless and cruel; and now he had come to the determination to wait night by night under the great elm trees by the side wall, when, even if I would not meet him, he would still have the satisfaction of stilling the beatings of his aching heart by folding his arms about it, leaning against some solitary, rugged trunk, and gazing upon the casket which contained his treasure. I might join him, or I might leave him to his bitter solitude; but there he would be, night after night, as a guardian to watch over my safety.

It was a beautiful note, and no amount of translating could do it justice; for after the glowing French in which it was written, our language seems cold and blank.

What could I do? I could not go, and yet it was impossible to resist the appeal. How could I rest upon my pillow, knowing him to be alone in the garden watching, with weary, waiting eyes, for my coming?—for him to be there hour after hour, till the cold dawn was breaking, and then to turn away,

with Tennyson, slightly altered, upon his lips—

“*She cometh not, he said.*”

It was too much! I fought—as I had fought before, over and over again, thinking of how it would be wicked, wrong, imprudent, unmaidenly. Oh, what dozens of adjectives I did slap my poor face with that afternoon, vowing again and again that I would not heed his note. But it was unbearable; and at last, with flushed cheeks and throbbing pulses, I plunged the note beneath the front of my dress, exclaiming—
“Come what may, I will be there!”

TABLE TALK.

IN a paper read at the Royal Institution, Dr. Doran gives the following amusing specimens of Dryden’s dramatic criticisms: He spoke of Shakspeare as uncultivated by education or by converse with courts, and placed him on a level with Fletcher. He maintained that there was not a page in either poet that was not disfigured by “some solecism in speech, or some notorious flaw in sense,” and he subsequently adds, “of language.” Dryden pronounced the “Winter’s Tale,” “Measure for Measure,” and “Love’s Labour Lost,” to be so meanly written that the comedy neither caused your mirth nor the serious part your concernment; and did not hesitate to say that Shakspeare was open to as much contempt as admiration, that he was as often asleep as awake, and that he constantly fell into “a carelessness and a lethargy of thought.”

THIS FROM a husband and the father of many well-grown daughters. *Le Follet* says:—“There is some talk of bringing in the *fourreau* again; some of our *élégantes* are so tired of the senseless crowding with exaggerated trimmings. The *cuirassa* and *justau corps* bodices and tunics, mentioned last month, certainly seem a step in this direction.” And, in the words of Toole, “Still I am not happy.”

“GOOD WINE NEEDS no bush,” it is said. Bad milk evidently does; and that is why, above all other kinds of food, such a vast amount of advertising and puff is used to force it down our throats. We could get over this; but the howling made by its vendors, morning and afternoon, is simply

unbearable. Every can-bearer has some peculiar yodel of his own—a hideous yelp or maniacal howl—terrible enough, if not to wake the dead, certainly to make them uncomfortable in their beds. There is one elderly man who comes by our house just about half-past seven in the morning, when sleep is sweetest, and his cry, heard in some lonely wood far from civilization, would certainly be attributed to a gorilla. Another pest is a tall, thin boy of about sixteen, whose voice is entirely beyond his control, and who begins his “Milk ho!” or whatever he says, somewhere in the bass stave, ending it a note or two above the treble—either G or A. The suburbs are growing unbearable, what with milk cries by day and cats by night.

THE FOLLOWING are a few of the arithmetical questions given to the young lady pupils at an educational establishment, and may have something to do with the present strong-mindedness of women:

What is the value of $\frac{6\frac{3}{8}}{8\frac{3}{8}}$?

How many yards of cloth $4\frac{5}{8}$ ths of a yard wide are equivalent to 12 yards $\frac{3}{4}$ of a yard wide?

Change $4\frac{7}{8}$ ths to an equivalent fraction having 91 for its denominator.

The difference between $6\frac{7}{8}$ ths and $\frac{3}{4}$ of a number is 10; what is that number?

What is the sum of $\frac{3}{8}$, $1\frac{7}{12}$ ths, $10\frac{5}{6}$ ths, and $\frac{5}{2}$?

No doubt, it displays great ignorance to say so, but really one feels as if one would not care a sou if one’s wife and daughter turned from such questions as these with a shrug of the shoulders, and a declaration that they could make neither head nor tail of them. For our part, we would a great deal rather see them able to tot up the grocer’s or butcher’s bill than possess the knowledge by which they could “change $4\frac{7}{8}$ ths to an equivalent fraction having 91 for its denominator.” Suppose they could change it into its equivalent fraction, where would be the advantage, or what would accrue from the accomplishment?

All Contributions are attentively considered, and unaccepted MSS. are returned on receipt of stamps for postage; but the Editor cannot hold himself responsible for any accidental loss. No unaccepted MSS. will be returned until a written application has been made for them.

Communications to the Editor should be addressed to the Office, 19, Tavistock-street, Covent-garden, W.C.

Terms of Subscription to ONCE A WEEK, free by post:—Weekly Numbers for Six Months, 5s. 5d.; Monthly Parts, 5s. 8d.

ONCE A WEEK

NEW SERIES.

No. 331.

May 2, 1874.

Price 2d.

JACK'S SISTER; OR, WOMANLY PAST QUESTION.

CHAPTER XXVI.

"BUT SHE LOVED ENOCH, THO' SHE KNEW IT NOT."



THAT a flood of thought and feeling can be comprised in one half-second—the moment when two eyes meet! It was like an electric shock to Enid; and that, a shock from many wires all compressed

in one look. A shock of joy—great, wonderful, utterly unexpected, and utterly bewildering. A shock of pain, quick as lightning, keen as death: the pain—none more sharp in this world—which bears for title the cry, "Too late! too late!" a shock of shame and self-reproach so bitter and so overwhelming as to drown all else in one crimson tide. It all came and passed in that one moment; and Clifton saw just this—a rush of new, brilliant light in those grave, sweet eyes; a fair, dazzled face change from red to white and red again. And then a small black shadow fell on the grass, and Aunt Jane illustrated the proverb of "two is company, but three is none," by appearing on the scene with the cheerful remark—

"Enid, my love, it is five o'clock. Suppose you tell Margery to let us have our cup of tea out here. It looks so cool and comfortable where you are."

Enid fled away without a word. *She was* not cool and comfortable; only mightily thankful to escape. Clifton—well, of course, he had lost a chance, and was disappointed; but, after all, it was only for the moment. Enid must have guessed before. She knew now, and she was not vexed: he saw that in her face. There only remained to make her repeat it in words; and how many opportunities would there not be for that, perhaps even this very day? Some men might have avenged themselves on Aunt Jane for the interruption. Not he. She could not tell, poor old thing, what a bore she was; and besides, was he not planning how to take her child from her, and leave her more lonely than she was already? Why, the least he could do in compensation was to make himself additionally pleasant and courteous during his idol's temporary absence. Which accordingly Master Clif did, and contrived to entertain Miss Leyburn so brightly and genially, that the good lady drew mental comparisons between him and poor Merle; and wished heartily that he had taken it into his head to fall in love with Enid before that unfortunate cousin contrived to appropriate her.

"It is strange he should not care for the child, when he evidently likes *me* so much," the spinster thought, and with pardonable vanity. "And yet she is very like *me*" (!)

(N.B. "Oh! wad some power the giftie gie us, to see oursels as ithers see us.")

Virtue is not always its own reward, let the copy-books say what they will. Poor Clifton talked on. The tea came out, and was arranged on a little table under the walnut tree; but no Enid appeared to serve it. On the contrary, Margery brought a message. "Would they please to excuse her, as she found she had a letter to write?" and that letter took so long, that though Clifton lingered over his tea, and dallied over his talk, no second shadow fell upon the lawn; and very unwillingly the young gentleman

departed, shaking hands so lingeringly, and with such a melancholy look in his eyes, that Miss Leyburn was more than ever convinced of his affection for her company, and uttered a fluttering little mental hope that "the silly boy was not going to make a fool of himself about her. At her time of life, too! To be sure, though, some women never did lose their fascination to cultivated minds; and he was so charming, poor fellow! She would be quite sorry to cause him any pain on her account. If it had only been Enid now!"

Enid, meanwhile, was shut into her own room—down on her knees, with the door bolted, and weeping as she had never wept since her father's death: sobbing in sorrow and humiliation, which neither death nor any God-given grief could ever cause her, over her own fault, her own sin.

"How could she! how *could* she!"

It seemed to this young woman, being, as she was, pure and innocent as a baby, that by that one shock of joy—joy which, however momentary, she never dreamt of denying or ignoring—that she had fallen to the very lowest depths to which it was possible for a woman to fall; had broken her maiden crown, and blackened her white robes to all eternity.

"I thought he loved me, and I was glad," she kept saying to herself. "I, the betrothed wife of one man, felt *glad* that another man should love me! Oh! how could I be so base? How they would both despise me if they knew—Merle, my own Merle; and Clifton, so true a gentleman, so upright, and noble, and——"

Here the thought struck her that to dwell on the virtues of this latter gentleman was not the best cure for gladness at being loved by such a perfect being; and a fresh rain of tears trickled hotly through the firm white fingers, and shook the stately figure of this childlike Juno.

Reader, please don't laugh; or, if you must, do it kindly. It was very absurd, of course—a ludicrous exaggeration of a most natural and Lilliputian slip—*mais que voulez vous?* There *are* some women whose minds don't run on lovers and love-making; who look on empty conquests as blurs rather than stars on a woman's name; and count the faintest mental deviation from the paths of fidelity as seriously as others do those coarser breaches of the laws of womanly purity which come under the cognizance of

the scandalmongers and sensation novelists of the nineteenth century. This young queen, who had held beneficent sway over her quiet kingdom for over two and twenty years, walking smoothly and calmly in her own straight path, and making rough places easy for weaker feet, had found a captive in one whom she had always regarded as a superior and benignant sovereign—a great Mogul, who would assist and sustain a weaker power, instead of casting his crown suddenly at her feet, and so bringing her to the ground, tripped by the sudden dazzle and glitter of so great and unexpected a prize.

Poor Enid, kneeling there with the afternoon sunlight falling in slanting golden bars across the green flicker of vine leaves at her window, and over her bent head and white coverlid, she thought of Merle and her engagement with a deep, heart-felt penitence which that young graduate could hardly have understood. She knew it now. If Merle had ~~always been her~~ ^{been her} care, Clifton was her ~~hero~~. His words and actions shone with a halo quite different to other men's. His notice of her had been a condescension, even in their childish days; his face a beautiful picture, at which she loved to look; his voice, even in speaking, like music to her ears. That he should have saved Jack's life, and so given himself a direct claim on her loving homage, seemed only a natural result of his godlike qualities. Such a feat would not have been permitted to a less perfect being. Merle praised him, Jack worshipped him. Could she, their junior and inferior, do less? Besides, there was something in his manner so bright and caressing, in his conversation so pleasant and sympathetic, that it always gave her a feeling of irresistible peace and sunshine. She liked being near him. The very sound of his happy laughter made her happy too; while the readiness with which he entered into her graver feelings prevented the possibility of her ever feeling constrained or unnatural when in his company. And then his mother, that beautiful old lady, with the smiling eyes, and sweet, pathetic voice, how happy she had been with them both—how perfectly content and at rest during the last fortnight, even though Merle was away; and, now she thought of it, she had not had so much as a line from him during the last eight days, and yet had never fretted herself to wonder why. Ah! dear, it

was very wrong, very silly, this dallying with royalty in Calypso's grot, when she herself was a subject, and owed allegiance to another king, a poor man, who could not afford to waste his time in paying her pretty little attentions; but had gone away from home and friends to earn a home for her and himself, and was working for them both now, poor fellow, in that great, grim London, miles and miles away.

And at the idea of her lover's lonely labours in that city of desolation—(N.B. June, and a particularly gay season)—the young woman's heart overflowed with tender pity; and she felt renewed self-contempt for having allowed the memory of her exiled lover to be cast into the shade, for ever so short a period, by this glittering young god; who, however admirable in himself, ought to have been but a "strange god" to her; and who, she felt sure, would be the first to condemn coquetry or light-mindedness in any woman.

Bang! Was not that the hall door? He was going away, then. That was his step on the gravel outside. In a moment she had sprung to her feet, I think with some feminine impulse of taking one unseen look at the hero who loved her—the hero she might have loved but for Merle's hastiness; but for— Was it so indeed? Was she Merle's only because he came first, his by circumstances, Clifton's by choice? Surely she could not be so weak, so faulty as that; and yet, why otherwise should her heart beat in wild, quick echo to those retreating footsteps? Why had she risen up, all flushed and quivering, at the sound of a closing door?

Why? Because she was a fool.

It was a rude answer, and smote rudely on her senses; but it did her good for all that; for she sat down on the edge of her bed, and wiped away her tears with a hasty but determined hand. She was not wicked, her own sense must have taught her that; for wickedness is wilful, and hers was an involuntary sin. But she was a fool! a silly, thoughtless girl, who had drifted to the very edge of infidelity from sheer foolishness; and because, in the pride of that foolishness, she had first despised and then forgotten her lover's warning. Ah, well! she was wiser now; had learnt her lesson, seen how thoughtful and right Merle was when he dropped that word which she had resented so warmly; and would be more

careful for the future, avoiding Clifton's conversation or society, not letting her mind run on his perfections, looking on him merely as Jack's friend—not even her own; she was not worthy to have a friend if love and friendship dwelt so nigh one another in her heart—and giving her whole thoughts up to Merle, poor Merle, who was away, and to whom they belonged of right. Could she not write to him now, by way of a beginning?

The idea pleased her, because it gave her something to do—some opportunity for acting on her thoughts instead of dreaming over them; and snatching at it, she got out her writing case and scribbled off three sheets of extra loving words, written caresses which were so unlike her usual calmly affectionate style, that Merle, reading, felt almost more puzzled than delighted—much like Coventry Patmore when, in proposing to the lofty queen of his imagination, he staggered beneath the shock of finding her ready to take him at his first word, and cried, abashed at his own power—

"My Queen was crouching at my side,
By love unsceptred and brought low—
How awful garb of maiden pride
All melted into tears like snow.

* * * * *

But this of making me her lord
Appeared such passionate excess,
I almost wished her state restored,
I almost wished she loved me less."

Enid was still engaged in writing her letter, when Miss Leyburn called her from below; and, only waiting to dry her still moist eyes, she ran downstairs in a humbled, penitent mood, which betrayed itself in the prompt obedience, downcast eyes, and timid manner of a child who knows it has done wrong, and expects to be punished for it. Aunt Jane, however, was in no criticising mood. She did, indeed, say a smiling word of wonder at having been left to administer five o'clock tea by herself; but her face wore a more than usually good-humoured expression, and she hardly waited for Enid's faltering apology before launching into a dissertation on Clifton's merits—

"So modest, so winning, so full of fun and spirit. More like the men of my time, my dear, than the vacant-faced young idiots, with humped-up shoulders and affected drawl, that one sees nowadays."

"Is he?" Enid said, hating herself for the rebellious blood which would rush, carnation-wise, into her pale cheeks.

"Why of course he is, my dear, quite a different type, as you would say, if you had known Mr. Belwether or Sir Paul Trumpet—not the Trumpets of Tenterden, dear, but the Castle Cary branch. He used to bank with us, and I remember one day in April, '30—was it April, though? There were violets out; but that proves nothing, does it? There are violets in October. I don't think it can have been October, however, for I know he had on a white beaver hat and a sea-green flowered satin waistcoat. I remember that distinctly, for it was about the embroidery on the waistcoat—such satin stitch, my dear, you girls never do anything like it nowadays—that my mother spoke to him; and he fixed his eyes on me—he had lovely eyes, just like young Gore's—and said—'Possibly, madam, your kindness overrates them. For my part, I find them dull and faulty beside one fair blossom in this country town.' My mother asked him what it was. She considered me a mere child still, or she would not have pursued the subject; but I am sure he thought differently, for he answered—'Madam, the flower I speak of is hidden in my heart; and those you admire cover its name even from my eyes, lest their admiration scorch the flower to bud too soon.' Now, Enid, do you not call that exquisitely expressed? so ardent, and yet so delicate; and I really don't think you could tell Clifton from dear Sir Paul, he resembles him so much."

"Does he, auntie?" Enid said. She did not even laugh. Sir Paul was Aunt Jane's ideal; and what more natural than that Clifton should impress every one as the impersonation of their differing ideals? The mind is a moral Gibson, and tints every fair statue to the colour of its choice. If she herself did not paint him up to any especial picture, it was because she had never seen one his equal. Aunt Jane was more easily pleased, that was all. There could actually be *two* Cliftons in her world! At the present moment, however, Miss Leyburn was not pleased—Enid's indifference offended her.

"Does he, my dear!" she repeated. "Why, one would think you did not know him; and he so often here, and such a friend of Jack's—saving his life and all! Well, well, you girls are strange creatures. A man must be a fool or a savage to please you now; and the more he combines of both, the more you are pleased. That detestable person—what's his name?—in Mr.

Wilkie Collins's novel, 'Man and Wife,' is the sort of creature women prefer at present; and a great sign of their own degeneracy, too. Really, I don't wonder, after all, at Clifton preferring the society of a middle-aged person like myself, when young people with half his capacity underrate him so."

"I don't underrate him, auntie, indeed," poor Enid pleaded, very anxious to put an end to a discussion which set her pulses throbbing so hotly. "I like him very much, better than any one I know—after Jack and Merle, of course."

"Merle!" repeated Miss Leyburn, the more scornfully because of the slight emphasis which Enid had conscientiously laid on the name. "Oh, I forgot—he is your ideal! Then, my dear, I am not at all surprised at your failing to see young Gore's merits, for the two are as different as light from darkness."

"Very different," Enid answered patiently, though colouring; "but each equally good in his own way, and not the less friends for their difference."

"Oh, as to that, my dear, Clifton is friendly and civil to your cousin because of his relationship to this family; but as to real liking, why Merle is not capable of inspiring it in—"

"Dear auntie, please forgive my interrupting, but don't forget that Merle is to be my husband; and where I can love"—drawing herself up a little—"Clifton may very well like."

"Hoity-toity, Enid! Upon my word! And so old aunts are to be snubbed if they venture to hint that a young man who has never done an ounce of good in his whole life is not altogether perfect!"

Aunt Jane laughed ironically, and Enid coloured higher; but held her ground, answering, with a firm sweetness all her own—

"Merle has done good, and been good to me, many and many a time. I know he is not perfect, but neither am I; and yet I am sure it would give him great pain if he were to hear me spoken of contemptuously by those who do not love me. That was all I meant when I interrupted you—not to be rude. Please forgive me. I should say the same to any one who spoke unkindly of you; but Merle would never do so. He never says an unkind word of any one—not even of his enemies."

And having delivered this little testimony

with sparkling eyes and head erect, the young lady got up, kissed her aunt, and went away to dress for dinner. The small difference had really done her good—restored her to her usual moral poise, by enabling her to assert herself in the cause of right, and defend her lover against the man who had been near supplanting him; and now that the tide had turned, the current of her heart rushed with redoubled warmth towards its rightful owner. Her fingers trembled nervously as she began to braid up her hair, and she noted the fact with pleasure.

"Why, I am trembling! I must have been quite in a passion, and on Merle's account. I, so quiet usually! I must love him very much then, after all; and no wonder. He deserves every word I said, and more."

And so he did, in that sense. To throw dirt at his fellow-sinners had never been one of Merle's propensities; but whether Enid would have remembered that, had she wasted her hour of solitude in bemoanings over what "might have been," in the style of Owen Meredith's young ladies, may be doubted. As it was, she busied herself in loving memories of all Merle's talents, virtues, and charms, asking herself indignantly after each, "Is that worthless?" or "Could I *help* loving a person like this?" till she had worked herself up into quite a state of penitent enthusiasm; and, keenly mindful of the late coldness and shrinking which had so pained her lord, sat down to her desk and finished off her letter as follows:—

"I cannot bear your being away working while I stay at home, happy and idle; and yet I am not really happy without you. I wish I were at your side now—your wife, with the power to help and comfort you to the very best of my little power. Dear, dear Merle, how good you are; and how much too good to me! Believe, at least, that I thank and love you with my whole heart; and God bless you, my dearest.—Your own

"ENID."

Could any woman write with more fearless warmth and devotion? Could any woman, so writing from the depths of a heart as yet unscorched by passion's pain, guess that the very fact of having to bolster up her love by reiterated memories and assertions of the lover's merits, the fact of having to force her

mind to the duty of loving, and to force it away from even touching, far less dwelling, upon the merits of another, were sure proofs that the real fount of love, strong as death and hot as fire, the sacred passion of wife for husband and husband for wife, was as yet a depth grazed but unstirred within her heart, not even grazed by him to whom that heart belonged.

There is a knowledge which is born of pain. Later on, that knowledge came to Enid. She never guessed it now. All the love she knew of in her nature she poured on Merle, according as her double promise bound her. That strange, unguessed passion, whose mere vibration had so terribly upset her whole previous resources, was something which she instinctively knew to be dangerous—a thing turning from, not towards, her lover; and, therefore, a wrong thing, and one to be shunned and crushed out without delay.

All this was right and good in theory; but theory is not practice; and Enid found it uncommonly difficult to either shun or hate poor Clifton, especially as he gave her no cause for either, except in being more attentive than usual, and more anxious to please. She did her best, however. She hardly looked at him when he came next. She let her share of the conversation flag and die in the most lamentable fashion; and buried herself in a huge piece of crochet, at which she laboured conscientiously all the time of his visit. For this, she had her reward—a wistful, appealing look from such an eloquent pair of eyes as made her heart leap and flutter like a wounded bird, and Jack's indignant remonstrance, when he had let his friend out—

"What on earth is the matter with you to-day, Enid?"

"The matter? Nothing, dear," she answered, flushing nervously.

"Clif said he thought you had a headache. You hardly spoke one word all the time he was here. Have you?"

"I— Oh! no—"

If only she could have accepted the excuse truly, how nice it would have been!

"What made you so stupid, then? Any one would have thought Clif had offended you, to see you fiddling away at that bundle of rags, without finding so much as a civil word for a fellow who has ridden three or four miles to see you."

"I am very sorry, Jack," Enid said, her

voice very low and meek. "I didn't mean to be unfriendly."

"You were then, without meaning it," replied Jack, with brotherly curtness; "and I know Clif felt it, too. He looked quite cut up."

Enid made no answer; but when Jack had left the room, she put up her hands and dashed away two big tears which were upon the point of falling. How very weak she must be growing, to cry about such a trifle! And yet those two were not the last.

If Clifton were hurt, it wasn't in his pride; for only two days later, when Enid came in from her walk, Aunt Jane smilingly announced to her that she had just made an engagement for them both—

"The Gores are driving to Marshton Abbey the day after to-morrow, and we are to go with them; lunch in the ruins, that Lady Jane Eliott may have time to make a sketch, and drive home in the cool. There is only room for me in the carriage; so Miss Eliott, you, Captain Saumarez, and Clifton will ride. Clifton came himself to settle it. Was it not good of him; for he hadn't even time to come in, as he was going fishing with Captain Saumarez; and I'm afraid" (with a little simper) "the captain must have got quite impatient as it was, that dear boy stayed chatting so long upon the doorsteps with me. It will be very pleasant, will it not, love? Really, Lady Gore is very attentive."

Enid's cheek flushed in quick acquiescence; but, all the same, her mind was made up in a moment that the pleasure was not for her. If she could have gone in the carriage, it might have been different; but the ride with Clifton and a young man and woman who, being betrothed lovers, would naturally pair off together, merely meant rather more than an hour's tête-à-tête with a friend whose conversation always carried an irresistible charm for her; and who, some instinct whispered, was only waiting an opportunity for—well, never mind for what. The speed at which her heart was beating now was proof enough that this pleasure was too exciting for Merle's wife, and she seized valiantly at an excuse—

"It will be pleasant, auntie, for you; but I cannot go. It is my day at the schools, unfortunately."

"Can't you put them off, my dear?"

"No—oh, no. Mr. Lovejoy depends on

me; and then, after getting them up, and being so severe on unpunctuality in the children, it would never do for me to put them off for a drive. Shall I write to Lady Gore, or will it be sufficient for you to explain when the carriage comes round for you?"

"I think you had better write, love; but I am sorry you can't go. However, you don't seem to care much about it."

And Enid smiled and nodded, and ran off to write her note, the firm lips quivering strangely.

All that evening she spent in copying a water-colour sketch of the minster for Merle's lodgings.

OUR ELECTION.

BY A CANADIAN SETTLER.

IN TWO PARTS.—PART I.

IN the glowing and somewhat overdrawn pictures of backwoods life often penned after a brief holiday visit, we frequently discover a tendency to clothe the subject with a romance wholly opposed to ordinary experience, and to subvert the practical element to a degree that is well calculated to encourage the supposition that it requires but a minimum of labour to secure a maximum of prosperity. Nothing can be more fallacious than this belief, or more detrimental to the success of those who seek a home in the woods. It may be true of this country, that "if you tickle the ground with a hoe it will laugh into a crop," but it is also a fact that much heavy work has to be gone through preparatory to the "tickling" process.

There is little romance about hard labour from daybreak to sunset, with a monotonous diet of salt pork and potatoes one-half the year, and fresh pork and potatoes the other half. In addition to this, you may safely count upon being tormented during the summer months by myriads of ravenous black flies, sand flies, and mosquitoes.

Just as an illustration of the diabolical persistency of the black flies—which, by the bye, are most troublesome near the woods—I may mention a report, current in our township, to the effect that last summer one unfortunate Englishman was attacked with such ferocity that very little remained of his neck beside the spinal vertebrae. I cannot vouch for the truth of the story, but there is little doubt the man

suffered considerably—as, indeed, we all expect to do. But what matter! When the summer is past, the black flies are dead, and the mosquitoes and sand flies bite no more; our wounds are healed, the torment forgotten, and we live on through the glorious, bracing winter, gathering fresh vigour wherewith to meet the labours of another year, and fight against the next generation of winged adversaries.

Again, the toils and hardships of the earlier years of the settler's life are occasionally painted by unsuccessful men in such sombre tints as to cause any but those possessed of exceptionally strong nerves to recoil from a life which they are led to believe can have but few attractions, and is almost devoid of pleasure. But, in reply to those who are prone to represent a backwoodsman's existence in its least inviting aspect, I may remark that the materials for enjoyment, physical or intellectual, are by no means absent; and if, instead of a man lapsing into a mere piece of mechanism, he takes a lively, intelligent interest in the many attractive subjects for study with which Nature surrounds him, or feels any inclination to indulge in wild sports, he will find that his few leisure hours may be spent both pleasantly and profitably.

Taken altogether, life in the woods may be made tolerably comfortable, in spite of its inevitable seclusion and many inconveniences. This, at all events, is our opinion up at Hemlock Creek. We are a small household of five, including Dick Beef, the "hired man." Dick, surnamed Beef on account of his excessive partiality for a good steak, is a short, thickset, shock-headed fellow, who will get through the work of two ordinary men, providing he has a companion to work with; but if left to himself he speedily relaxes his energy, and composes himself for a comfortable doze at the foot of the nearest "stump." Whether or not Dick's propensity to sleep arises from the infrequent application of soap and water to his person, I will not undertake to decide; but certain it is that he would much rather walk a dozen miles every morning than wash his face more than once a week, Sunday ablutions being sufficiently troublesome to him.

Uncle John, a hale old man, of somewhat diminutive stature, who has well-nigh completed his seventh decade, occupies a considerable portion of his time in gardening;

and the produce of this, to him, labour of love proves a valuable addition to our culinary stores. It is a great treat to watch the old gentleman as he marches, with triumphant air, towards the house, carrying before him some gigantic cucumber or pumpkin, which he has watched and tended with the utmost solicitude from its infancy; but it is yet greater fun to see him give chase to the young porkers, when, regardless of the light fence which surrounds his little estate, they rush headlong over flower beds and vegetables, trampling down and destroying all in their way.

It is necessary to be very systematic in arranging our daily occupation, as there is always great danger, in our isolated position, of lapsing into a careless method of living and working, or no method at all.

At sunrise we are all astir. Dick, with a few strips of dried birch bark, and several beech "chunks," fixes the stove fire; and then, while he is feeding the cattle, Nellie, my little wife, prepares breakfast. And right well does she perform her duties. Rapid in her movements, ever active, and cheerful in disposition, she has, not inaptly, been dubbed the Sparrow. In the meantime, my brother Ned and I attend to any odd jobs, such as repairing the "jumper" (wooden summer sleigh), grinding our axes, or splitting "cordwood" for the stove. After breakfast the work of the day commences in earnest. If it be early spring, the oxen are yoked, and we go for a good spell at logging up the winter's fallow; if later in the season, of course the grain must be secured, after which the root crops require attention; or we are probably engaged underbrushing another slice of wild land, preparatory to cutting down the timber. And so the work of the year goes on.

Hemlock Creek occupies a somewhat out-of-the-way position in the forest; nevertheless we enjoy comparatively easy communication with our fellow-settlers. Going east—say on a bright autumnal day, when sober Nature arrays herself in all the gorgeous colours of a fairy transformation scene—we traverse a rough road of our own cutting, which, at the distance of half a mile from our clearing, joins the main road running north and south between the village of Hardington and the Rockville-road—one of the great Government lines, intended to open up the country for future settlement.

At the junction of our track with the Har-

dington-road, a noble pine rears its lofty head to a height of a hundred and sixty feet, and serves as a colossal guide-post when we are benighted on our return home from the village.

Three miles to the south, the road passes through the extensive clearing of our next door neighbour—Mr. Raymond, an English-born Yankee, who, after spending some thirty years as an American citizen, has returned to his old allegiance; and now, with his wife and two charming daughters, occupies a substantial frame house near the roadside, and runs a flourishing and gradually extending farm of a hundred and twenty acres—a large clearing for the back country.

Two miles nearer Hardington we come to the township burial ground, a dreary spot both in its appearance and its melancholy associations; numerous mounds of earth, fenced about in a rude fashion, testifying that, even during the brief existence of this young settlement, death has found too many victims. A short distance beyond the cemetery a long crossway, or corduroy road, carries us through a dense, tangled cedar swamp, one of several on our way, after which we continue to follow the windings of the road, at times quite overshadowed by the tall forest trees, whose luxuriantly clothed limbs bend and meet in graceful salutation midway over our path; or, where the woods recede on either side, we are favoured with a glimpse of the surrounding country.

Now and again, we hear the tapping of the industrious woodpecker, or occasionally we pause—when the mosquitoes will permit—to listen to the clear, musical piping of the little chickadee, or the plaintive cry of the whip-poor-will. There is a charm about the music of these little creatures, potent to soothe, at any rate, the English breast; for I can never listen to the mournful tones of the one, or the solitary air of the other, without involuntarily calling up memories of a happy long, long ago, of a far-away English home, and loving friends, perhaps seen for the last time.

In England, we are accustomed to associate the woods and fields with the joyful warbling of numerous little feathered songsters; and it is only when deprived of these tiny choristers of nature that we fully realize how much pleasure we have derived from their society. And as we listen here, in the solitude of the forest, to the chickadee

and whip-poor-will, we long to hear again the familiar songs of our old country favourites.

Presently, at a sharp turn of the road, we stand to gaze in an ecstasy of admiration at the glorious picture which is suddenly unveiled before us. There, at our feet, revelling in a flood of golden sunlight, lies an extensive, partially cleared valley, dotted here and there with the white houses of the settlers; while away in the distance, the village of Hardington nestles cosily at the foot of the forest-clad hills, which rise somewhat abruptly from the valley on the south. That silvery streak, now lost under the gaily tinted brush, and again seen sparkling brightly in the sunshine, marks the course of Moose Creek, as it dashes merrily along westward to join the fine expanse of water known as Eagle Lake, which stretches away to the right for full twenty miles. This busy little stream, by supplying the motive power for the village grist and saw mills, affords us almost the only evidence of active life in this lovely vale; as, were it not for the low rumbling borne towards us, through the calm, pure atmosphere, there would be scarcely a sound to break the grave-like silence which prevails.

Turning to the left, we now descend rapidly from our elevated position, and passing over the stout timber bridge which spans the creek, enter the village—which consists of one long street—and stop at Dan Buckley's dry goods store and post-office—the first building on our left. Dan, by virtue of his postmastership, is a man of some importance in the settlement; for even in this country of equality and fraternity, a certain degree of respect and deference is invariably accorded to the holder of any Government office. Apart from all official claims on their esteem, however, Dan enjoys a rare popularity among the settlers, on account of his many excellent social qualities. Yet, although possessed of an amiable disposition, he is not deficient in firmness of character; and being a man of remarkable stature, and extraordinary muscular development, he is able and ready to enforce strict order amongst the sometimes unruly customers who flock to his store every Saturday night for letters and necessities. Woe to the unlucky wight who rashly defies his authority; for in a twinkling he finds himself sprawling in the street.

Throughout this country it is customary for every man to go to the post-office for his letters, and in the woods this is the only practicable system. Of course, the delivery of letters in thinly populated districts would necessitate the employment of a letter carrier for every half-dozen settlers; and, as we say here, "it wouldn't pay." This being the case, and many having to travel from four to fifteen miles, Saturday afternoon is set apart for the purpose of going to the village to make purchases at the stores, call for letters, and indulge in a sweet gossip at Dan Buckley's.

Mrs. Buckley is a pleasant, "comfortable" body, with a kind word for each customer, and a never-failing store of harmless gossip. No woman in the village is half so intimate with the private history of her neighbours; yet she uses her knowledge discreetly, and is never betrayed into slander or backbiting. There are "great times" at her house in the way of husking, and quilting bees, and other social gatherings.

On these occasions, Mrs. Buckley and her daughter Maggie—a fair, buxom lassie of eighteen—contrive to entertain their visitors so satisfactorily that they invariably separate with great reluctance. The last of these pleasant meetings—which may truly be counted among the bright little oases in the desert of a backwoods life—took place on the day appointed for the election of "reeve" and councillors for this township of Dyson.

The annual election, as may easily be imagined, is an affair of great importance in our uneventful career. Great excitement prevailed, as usual, throughout the settlement for several weeks previous to the contest; and hot discussions arose whenever a few men met in the village tavern—I beg the "boss's" pardon, the Anglo-American Hotel—or by the storekeepers' counters. The great place for ventilating opinions was, however, Dan Buckley's; and during the noisy arguments which frequently occurred, each party in turn would appeal to him to settle some disputed point, and his decision was accepted as final.

It has been said that if many a dead man could rise and read the epitaph upon his tombstone, he would at once conclude that he had been lying in the wrong grave; and it is equally certain, that if any one of the candidates for election had been pre-

sent at Dan's while his character and abilities were undergoing analysis, he would have failed to recognize himself, either in the saintly genius depicted by his partisans, or the weak-minded vagabond held up to public scorn by his opponents. The faculty of inventing new epithets was developed to an extraordinary degree in the comparisons drawn, for instance, between Tom Harding, the "boss" of the Anglo-American Hotel, and little Crawley, the shoemaker.

Tom was the pioneer of the settlement; for the ring of the axe had never echoed through the forest around Eagle Lake until he first encamped, eight years ago, on the very spot where his hotel now stands. A sturdy, broad-shouldered fellow, with an honest, open heart, and a straightforward manner, is Tom; and a thoroughly representative John Bull. In ordinary times he is a general favourite; but previous to the election was more or less abused by his political opponents.

As to Crawley, a single glimpse of his person is well calculated to awaken within the beholder certain uneasy misgivings concerning the true origin of our race; in short, he is painfully suggestive of the missing link. Like many of Crispin's disciples, he is a politician to the backbone; and is never more thoroughly in his element than when expounding his views upon some popular question to the knot of loafers who haunt his store. On these occasions he will throw down the last, leather, and awl, leap with great agility upon his bench, and encouraged by sundry cries of "Bully for you," "That's so," hold forth with surprising volubility, until compelled through sheer physical exhaustion to desist. The termination of his harangue is invariably the signal for the whole company to go across the road to the Anglo-American, for the purpose of liquoring up at Mr. Crawley's expense.

Several other candidates for municipal honours were in the field, of whom it will suffice to say that each one had friends to flatter and opponents to condemn him; and of course there was not the shadow of a doubt that every man of them would be returned at the head of the poll.

In due time the morning of the election day arrived; and as this was a high day at Hemlock Creek, as in other parts of the township, we were up and doing at least an hour earlier than usual, notwithstanding it

was in the depth of winter, being determined to make the most of our holiday.

At sunrise, Uncle John put on his great fur cap and mits, went to the door, and surveyed the heavens with the deliberate air of a man who has "had some experience in these matters, sir," and is conscious of the value placed upon his opinion. The result of his observations was communicated in a somewhat melancholy tone of voice, accompanied with an ominous shake of the head; nevertheless, we were in too high spirits to be seriously affected by his gloomy prognostications, and we continued our preparations for the day's pleasure with unabated vigour and the lightest of hearts imaginable. True, the heavy, gathering clouds last night gave unmistakable warning of a snow-storm to-day; yet we clung to the hope that the weather would eventually turn out favourable to our trip. Not to be taken unawares, however, Dick had been instructed to pack the sleigh well with several extra rugs and "buffaloes."

Ned was unusually fastidious about his dress that morning; and as the time drew near for starting, his excitement afforded us great amusement. Everything he required seemed to be out of the way. Twice he was driven well-nigh to distraction by the bursting of his paper collar; and for five long minutes did he battle manfully with an aggravating tuft of hair, which obstinately refused to lie down. Ned's anxiety about his personal appearance was scarcely to be wondered at; for we had good reason to suspect that he was not altogether indifferent to the charms of Agnes Raymond's dark beauty; and to-day he was to have the honour of escorting her down to the village.

Both Agnes and her younger sister, Lucy, are lovely brunettes; but Agnes, with her plump, well-proportioned figure, is the more showy girl of the two. She is a happy, impulsive creature, brimful of fun and mischief; and the power of her lustrous black eyes has turned the heads of half the young settlers in the township.

All our preparations being completed, Nellie, followed cautiously by Uncle John, at once stepped lightly into the sleigh, which Dick had brought round to the door, and I wrapped the warm furs about them almost to suffocation.

"Now, Ned," cried the little woman, maliciously, "at your pleasure."

"Coming, coming!" shouted Ned.

He was just taking a last fond look at the mirror; and immediately afterwards he darted out of the house, and hastily mounted "his nimble steed."

"All fixed now?" I inquired, with an impatient flourish of the whip.

"Ye-es," said uncle, nervously; "but do keep clear of the stumps, my lad."

"All right," I replied.

And with a cheer from Dick—who was left in charge of the place during our absence—we shot through the clearing, and gained the road in a twinkling, without realizing the fears of the old gentleman, who evidently had no relish for an upset in the snow.

Swiftly we glided on our way towards Hardington, making the woods ring again with our laughter, and occasionally startling groups of half-starved deer as we swung round some abrupt turn in the road. In the meantime darker and more threatening grew the lowering snow clouds, until at last, when within a few minutes' run of the Raymonds', the inevitable storm burst suddenly and furiously upon us. The wind quickly rose to a perfect hurricane; and, as usual in these Canadian storms, scores of forest giants were torn up by the roots with great violence, and sent crashing to the earth with terrible force. No inconsiderable risk is incurred by travelling through the woods at these times, and we kept an active look-out on all sides for falling timber.

The heavy snowfall now obscured everything beyond our horses' heads. Fortunately, however, the brave animals required neither guidance nor prompting, but pushed forward at a hard gallop; and presently we had the satisfaction of halting at the door of our friend Raymond, covered thickly with snow, and right glad to obtain shelter. Our immediate fear now was that the drifting snow would effectually block the road, and so prematurely terminate our excursion; but in a short time, contrary to our expectation, the clouds began rapidly to disperse, the wind abated, and with the first gleam of sunshine our hopes of a day's pleasure revived.

A PAYING COMPLAINT.

"COME down and see us again from the Saturday to the Monday in the same way," said Larriatt, giving the collar of my great-coat an upward drag.

Never offer to assist a lady to mount, or to help a man to put on his great-coat, unless you are clever at it. Larriatt had delayed me two minutes with his well-meant assistance—I had shoved my arm into each pocket in turn before hitting off the arm-hole.

"Yes, do," seconded his admirable and hospitable wife, who stood by, with an open cigar box in her hand.

I like cold game and angels on horseback for breakfast; and I was touched.

"I will," said I, firmly as a bride past thirty. "You are sure that the omnibus has not passed?"

"Certain," replied that really most estimable Mrs. Larriatt, offering me a lighted match.

"It is coming over the top of the hill now," added her husband.

"Good-bye—good-bye," and I was in the road.

As there are no limits to human ignorance, some one may ask what are angels on horseback?

I reply, "Take a piece of toast the size of half-a-crown, slightly butter it, lay on it a thinnest slice of bacon exactly fitting it, crown all with an oyster, cook in a Dutch oven, and remember me in your will.* A small portion of the roe of a herring may be substituted for the oyster, and then the *bonne bouche* is a—not an angel, the other thing—on horseback."

This invaluable digression represents the time it took the omnibus to come up. The driver raised his whip, I waved my umbrella; the 'bus, not being a train, obeyed the signal and stopped. I handed up my bag, and prepared to follow it—a gymnastic exercise which I have shirked of late years, but which the lighted cigar necessitated; for tobacco may only be ignited on the box.

The mounting was really no easy feat for a man of my figure; and though aided by a leather strap which the driver kindly extended to me, I had a desperate struggle in mid-air—amidst wheels and sharp iron scrapers, which would have been useful as steps if my right foot had been my left, and my left foot had been my right—before I was finally deposited by his side.

* Should gratitude for this receipt really demand testamentary utterance from any noble-hearted man, the name and address of his benefactor may be had upon application through the Editor.

"Morning, sir," he said, welcoming me, as it were, to a new sphere.

"Good morning," I replied.

"Fine weather for the turmuts."

Omnibus drivers are all either sporting, agricultural, or legal. I was glad that this one was agricultural, because I can talk wisely of beasts and crops to those who know no more about them than I do myself; but my ignorance concerning the turf and the courts is sure to be brought to light.

"At what time shall we reach the Bank?" I asked, presently.

"We are jew," he replied, with an accent, "at 10.15; but as there's a street up, it may be 10.25. Hallo! if there aint the Case!"

We were approaching a roadside inn, at the door of which stood a man whom I recognized as the Case—first, because he was the only human being in sight; and secondly, in consequence of his looking like a creature who ought to have a queer nickname.

He had a large head, with a boy's cap on it; he was short in the legs and long in the arms; he had a hunch on his back, and the expression of a magpie.

"Going home, Tommy?" asked the driver, pulling up.

"I am a returning to my town residence, yes," replied the other, preparing to climb.

"Listen to him," chuckled the driver, with a nudging motion of his elbow towards my ribs; "his town residence! Aint he prime?"

I assisted the Case, alias Tommy, in his ascent, which was less clumsily attempted than my own, and he thanked me very civilly.

"Been on the spree, Tommy?" inquired the 'bus-man, driving on when his new passenger was settled.

"A little houting, that's all," replied the other.

"And the Sawboneses stood the where-withal, as usual?" asked the driver.

"You shouldn't use such vulgar words, Dick," said the Case, reprovingly; "the gentleman may belong to the perfession. Not that Dick means to be disrespectful, sir," he added to me—"only playful."

I assured him that I was not a medical man. He replied that if I were, I should take great interest in him.

"Indeed?" said I.

"Yes," he replied; "I am the pet of the faculty."

I had heard of a pet of the ballet, but this present description of favouritism was new to me, and I owned it.

"I dessay, very likely," said he; "I am a hewnique Case."

"And a good thing he makes of it," interpolated the driver.

"No, Dick, not a good thing," demurred the Case. "I don't impose on my advantages. But I do live comfortable, and have a houting now and then."

It was necessary to make an observation, so I said—

"Dear me!"

"Yes. It is a easier life than that of porter at them docks—that's what I was for fifteen year. Hard work and short commons was my usual lot in them times. Ah, it was a blessed day that a cart went over my stomach."

I am not addicted to profane swearing, but I confess with shame that this assertion did for once startle me from my propriety, and I exclaimed—

"The deuce!"

"A blessed day," he repeated, piously, "which I celebrate it regular with a social glass—with several social glasses."

"It is lucky you can," said I. "Such an event does not generally tend to conviviality."

"Right you are, sir, it does not. That I lived was what Sir Benjamin called a murrice—meaning, you know, a toss-up. But that there accident was the making of me."

"Ah, you recovered damages, I suppose."

"Recovered from my damages? Well, yes, to a certain extent, as one may say. They took me to Saint Anthony's, and there I was treated right well, I was."

"And what did you do when you were discharged?"

"I never was discharged, sir, and I never shall be—never."

"Till you die, Tommy," put in the driver.

"No, not when I die," replied the Case; "for then I shall be a specimen."

"Do you mean to say that you live at the hospital, then?" I asked.

"I do, and very comfortable they make me. It's a bargain between us—they are to keep me while I live, and have me for a specimen, when I don't want myself no longer. You see, I have got a inside which

only comes once in a couple of hundred years or so, like them comets. The top doctors lecture on me sometimes, and so I have come to know all about it—at least, so far as they know themselves, for I shan't be quite clear till they open me. But they're very patient, and so am I. You don't know medical terms, I suppose, sir, else it might explain things a bit when I tell you I am a *loose us naturree*."

"I wonder that the hospital authorities like to let so valuable a patient out of their sight," I observed, complimentarily.

"They don't like it," he replied; "they grumble. But I must have my houting at times. So, when I feel as if it would do me good to get tight, I tell the house surgeon I'm a-going, and want a trifle of pocket money. If he does not stump up at once, I threaten to go off to Saint George's, or Saint Mary's, or Guy's. Bless you, they would all jump at me! He knows that well enough, and that fetches him. Not that I'd really go for to do such a mean trick after all these years. It's all brag."

"But why don't you get tight at home, Tommy?" inquired the driver. "The Sawboneses would stand the stuff."

"They would," replied the Case, gravely. "But you see, though they are real gentlemen, and very good to me, yet some of them are young and eagerish, and others are old and inquisitive, and science is science. They might play tricks— But there's Saint Anthony's—my town residence, as I call it. I get down here. Good day, Dick. Good day, sir."

ONLY A YEAR.

CHAPTER IX.

"MY GOD, HOW I HATE HIM!"

MR. HASSON GRAINGER had not been wasting his time that afternoon as the other young people had. As they approached Hallingford, he saw Thyrlé riding slowly down the principal street. Hasson made a hasty excuse to Gilfred, and turned down a by-way before Thyrlé had recognized him.

He quickly made up his mind as to the calls he would make.

He rode straight to Merresford, and inquired for Miss Mason. He would not send in his card or be announced; and the old woman peered at her visitor, unable to recollect him.

"I sud ken your face," she said; "but I cannot mind on."

"I am altered, I dare say, Miss Mason, since I last saw you—six years change a boy into a man. You will, at least, remember my name—Hasson Grainger."

She started to her feet.

"For the sake of the Lord above, be-gone!" she exclaimed. "Sud Archer come and find ye in his hoose, I wad na say if murder were na dune. Sarty, ye wad merit it! Eh, thoo fule, what for end thoo come to see Archer Thyrlie?"

Hasson absolutely laughed.

"Faith, I came to see you, Miss Mason; not my friend Thyrlie."

"But sud he come back?" she returned, in an evident tremor.

"He won't come back yet awhile. I saw him going towards— Do you know who he was going to see to-day?"

"I don't niind on," she said, her "thinkin' mind" being much confused. "He said he was goin' somewheres—he wantit me to go wi' him—aye, it was to ca' at the Kyriels'."

"I thought so," muttered Grainger. "Well, Miss Mason, he is at the Manor House now, probably—and will have found Phillis Kyriel alone; so we need not expect him back very soon."

"Eh?" said the old woman, with super-human sharpness.

"Well," he answered, assuming indifference, "you don't, I fancy, require me to tell you that it won't be long before you have a beautiful niece."

"By the Lord Harry! what's aw this?" exclaimed Miss Mason, in much agitation, fearing matters might have gone farther than she was aware of.

"What, you wouldn't care for it? You don't like the lovely Miss Kyriel?"

"No," she answered, sullenly, "I don't like Miss Kyriel."

"Do you know that it may depend very much on you to prevent this?"

"I'll do my best, then," was her answer.

It is needless to repeat the instructions she received, cleverly given so as to seem her own suggestions; how Thyrlie's comings and goings were, if important, to be related to Grainger; how his chance remarks were to be remembered for the same purpose; and how, above all, his letters were to be closely watched.

"A good hour's work," thought Hasson, as he remounted. "I shall see, my fair

Phillis, though you do disdain me now, and fling your soft eyes at the miner's son—I shall see if I cannot do something to make you remember Hasson Grainger. And Archer Thyrlie, my old friend, we will also see if we can't be even yet. I have a long score to settle with you. My God, how I hate him!"

Phillis, late that night, did what she had seldom or ever done before—she went to her sister's room to talk to her.

There was a gap of several years between their ages; and, until quite lately, Phillis had considered Kittie only a child.

To-day she had felt, with a strange pang, that she was a possible rival.

She found Kittie kneeling before her fire, gazing thoughtfully into it—her long, fair hair falling over her shoulders.

"May I come in, Kittie?"

"Are you not well, dear Phil?" exclaimed Kittie, springing to her feet. "I thought you silent and tired this evening."

"I'm quite well, thank you, Kittie."

And having closed the door carefully, Phillis sat down near the fire. These girls were fond of each other, each in her different way—Phillis rather protective and undemonstrative; Kittie's more clinging nature looking up to and admiring her sister, and everything she chose to do. Kittie knew no more of Phillis's past life than the world did—that, as a girl of seventeen, she had been engaged to Hasson Grainger, and that the engagement had been broken off. And Kittie did not know that this had ever cost her sister so much as a tear.

"Why do you think I have come to see you?" asked Phillis, looking full in the fair young face, and thinking how, when she was eighteen, she had, night after night, wept and sobbed herself to sleep, after fighting all day to keep up an appearance of careless happiness.

"I don't know, Phil; I was afraid you were not well."

"Good, pretty, kind little Kittie," said Phillis, in a tone more caressing than she often used. "I have come, dear child, to see if I have found out what will make you happy."

A blush quickly covered the young girl's face.

"Oh, I'm happy enough," she murmured.

"Tell me, Kittie—quite truly," urged

Phillis; "do you care anything for Frank Brooke?"

Poor Kittie. Thinking that her irresistible hero had captivated even the unsusceptible heart of the beauty of Knollinghamshire, and that her generous sister would not accept him because she feared for little Kittie's happiness, she exclaimed quickly, but not without starting tears of pain—

"No, indeed, dear Phil. I would rather a thousand times see you happy than myself—and—I hope you will both be—"

"What is this, Kittie, child?" interrupted Phillis, in much amazement. "Well, it doesn't matter what it is, since you have displayed your transparent little heart through it. I think no more of Brooke, Kittie, save that he is in some sort dear to you, than I do of that china shepherd on the chimney-piece."

"Are you sure, Phil?" demanded Kittie, seizing her sister's hands, and through her tears scanning the proud, sweet face which met her eyes so openly. "Because—because—don't be angry—but you know you have encouraged—well, led him on, poor fellow; and he thinks no one like you, I know."

The dark, proud eyes fell under the soft blue ones.

"You are right, Kittie, and I have been wrong. I know I have encouraged him and led him on, but only—only to fool him—only to smile in his face and look astonished at his audacity when the time shall come that he will say he loves me: as I have smiled and looked—God forgive me!—on many men. Oh, you innocent child, how much more you deserve happiness than I do! You shall have it, too. Brooke shall know soon enough that I am tired of him; and you—well," she added, smiling and kissing her, "I must, of course, leave the rest to you. Good night, child; and pleasant dreams, pretty one."

Then Phillis went away, and for many a long hour sat thinking very earnestly. She had been so near wrecking the happiness of her sister, that the shock and surprise of the discovery had terrified her. Thyrlé's few words of admiration of Kittie had led Phillis quietly to observe her that evening, and the result had been the conversation in Kittie's room.

"To think," said Phillis to herself, with a flush of pain and shame, "of that sweet, patient little creature looking on, without a

complaint or a murmur, while I went through my wretched rôle—winning love and admiration, for no end, from better and nobler hearts than my own a thousand times. How I despise myself!"

The next morning Gilfred announced his intention of riding over to Merresford in the afternoon, and asking Mr. Thyrlé to come back with him to dinner.

"I can tell him we see so few people on account of poor mother; and if he doesn't care to come, he can stay away. I have been very unlucky in always missing him, and he really seems a very decent, unpretending sort of fellow."

"I want to go to Hernsley," said Phillis, "and I will ride with you; and you can call for me as you come back."

"All right. Do you care to come, Brooke?"

"I want Mr. Brooke, if he won't very much mind, to do something for me," interposed Phillis.

Mr. Brooke professed himself her slave, and Phillis continued—

"I do so want you, Kittie, to call on those old Miss Hills at Forley. I ought to have gone ages ago; but if you will take a card of mine and apologize, they will be only too pleased to see you instead. It is too far for Kittie to walk, Mr. Brooke—quite eight miles; and I thought if you would be so kind as to drive her in the little pony trap. The groom must go with me, you see; and the stable boy is not fit to be trusted with Kittie."

Mr. Brooke again declared his pleasure to do as he was bid, in spite of Kittie's blushing protestations that she could quite as well walk, if she rested by the way at Akenhurst. Phillis, as usual, overruled everything; and Gilfred whistled quietly, merely wondering what the deuce Phil was up to now.

At Hernsley, Phillis found them in high tide of preparation for the ball. The great dancing-room was being decorated with antlers, foxes' heads, brushes, &c.; the floor was undergoing the necessary processes; and an arched passage was nearly finished which was to lead into the beautiful conservatory—a new idea, and "a great improvement," as Phillis said, with an appropriate chorus from the three Miss Roses.

In due time Gilfred, accompanied by Mr. Thyrlé, called for Phillis, and they rode to the Manor House together.

They found Kittie and Mr. Brooke lingering over kettledrum in the twilight; and it would be rather difficult to define all the mingled feelings which Thyrlé, who had for years been a wanderer on the face of the earth, experienced on being thus admitted into the inner circle of the house of an English gentleman. It was pleasant, no doubt; so unconstrained, so merry, and withal so refined. There was Phillis, on a low stool, close by the fire, and playing with the silky ears of Juno, Gilfred's great setter, which was privileged to go where it pleased. There was Gilfred, lounging on a couch close to Phillis, occasionally giving Juno a pat. There was Kittie, with her pretty fingers busy at the tea; and Mr. Brooke, dividing his attention between the lovely colour the cold wind had brought to Miss Kyriel's cheeks, and helping Kittie with the sugar and cream. The talk was gay, and laughter ready; Phillis doing the greater part of the entertaining, when the door opened, and in his usual free and easy manner, Hasson Grainger entered unannounced.

Phillis was suddenly silent. Gilfred got up reluctantly, and shook hands with the intruder. Kittie gave him a frank, smiling welcome; Phillis merely saying, "How do you do?" to him from her corner, and he had to advance to her side before she vouchsafed him even a finger.

Then, looking across the hearth rug, Grainger saw Thyrlé in an easy-chair, apparently much at home, and not in the least conscious of being out of his proper sphere. As he took not the slightest notice of Grainger's attempt at recognition, Gilfred, who had heard the introduction by Sir George Rose, said to Thyrlé—

"This is Mr. Grainger—you met him the other evening at Hemsley."

Thyrlé received this intimation in silence; but, from civility to his host, he rose and acknowledged this introduction much in the same manner he had the first. Then he crossed the room, and took a seat beside Brooke, with whom he began to discuss the last day's run.

Grainger looked embarrassed and annoyed as he stood furtively watching Thyrlé, but said not a word. The two girls soon left the room to dress for dinner. Brooke and Thyrlé continued talking together, and presently Grainger said in an undertone to Gilfred—

"Just come into the hall with me."

Gilfred went, though not very readily.

"Upon my soul, Fred," began Hasson, "I wonder you notice that fellow Thyrlé. He has not the smallest pretension to being a gentleman. He has thought it prudent, for reasons best known to himself, to live abroad for the last few years—because of some shady transaction, I believe. He isn't at all a man to bring here and introduce to your sisters. For one thing, his father was a miner—a common labouring man; and he hates me because I know this."

Gilfred was perfectly silent; but he thought that Thyrlé's hatred was very much the least active, and that Hasson was scarcely in a position to cavil at people for living abroad, or at their reasons for so doing. Nor did Gilfred feel disposed to be dictated to by him as to whom he thought fit to be introduced to the Miss Kyriels. Could Gilfred have had his way, Hasson would have found himself among the prohibited acquaintance.

"He hates me also," continued Grainger, in a strangely unsteady voice, "because, years ago, I happened to cut him out in the good graces of a pretty girl. He was an unruly young cub in those days, and was going to make a row; so I had to give him a good flogging to silence him, which he does not seem to forget. He would be better for another now, confound him! I can't think how the deuce you tolerate him; but he is a sort of fellow you will find out soon—a sort of fellow who can't help showing the canaille that he is—"

"Is he a sort of fellow," put in Gilfred, quietly, "who says things of a man behind his back which he doesn't care about saying to his face?"

"Confound you! Do you want to quarrel with me, too? Everybody is down on a poor beggar when he is out of luck's way, as I am."

"Nonsense!" interrupted Gilfred, whose opinion of Mr. Thyrlé was rather raised than otherwise by the fact that Hasson so bitterly disliked him; "say no more. If I don't like Thyrlé, I shall find a way quickly enough to tell him as much." (Grainger knew this to be true by experience.) "If I do, it will be merely a case of differing with your notions—nothing so very uncommon, after all."

"But how can I ever come to the house, and run the risk of encountering him?" demanded Hasson.

"I can't be expected to take up either your side of the quarrel or his, especially when I have only heard one story," was the cold reply. "About coming to the Manor House, you must please yourself."

"Well, after all, it can't matter much to me if I do see him now and then—black-guard though he is—so, all right," returned Hasson, with assumed indifference. "Good night. I must be off now—it's getting late."

Thyrlé displayed not a sign of being ruffled or annoyed by the late rencontre, nor alluded in any way to Hasson Grainger; but he made himself as agreeable as any man possibly could during the sociable little dinner.

Mrs. Kyriel was in the drawing-room when they returned there—a peculiarly beautiful woman, in whose face the features of Phillis and the softness of Kittie were blended with a touching look of patient suffering.

Thyrlé was indescribably fascinated; and nearly the whole evening he sat near her couch, often winning a bright smile and a glance of quick intelligence as they talked together of books, music, cities, and people. Few men could talk better than Thyrlé when he chose—that is, when he was thoroughly interested; and he was so that evening. He was naturally clever; and as it had been his father's paramount wish that his boy should be a gentleman, Archer was sent to Rugby and Cambridge. For six years—ever after he left college until he came to Merresford—Thyrlé had travelled incessantly; and, by the help of keen observation and other endowments, had unconsciously fulfilled—not only to the letter, but in the spirit—the wish of his father, though his wanderings had only been to fill up the years in an objectless life.

Reading was one of poor Mrs. Kyriel's great pleasures in her intervals from pain, especially Italian literature, which she found troublesome and often difficult to get. Thyrlé promised to bring over one or two books she had long desired to see, and which he had purchased in Rome; and he quoted from her favourite authors, and described bits of scenery to her which she knew only from books, and showed her a curious old ring he wore of chased solid gold, which had been given him by a monk. He was not drawn from Mrs. Kyriel's side by the singing of Phillis or Kittie, and even Mrs. Kyriel's urgent and very unselfish request

that he would "go and join the young people" was of no avail.

When Gildred returned from the hall, where he had been supplying his guest at parting with a cigar, he was greeted by a chorus of exclamations.

"What a *very* nice fellow he is, Fred," from Kittie; "so kind to mamma."

"A very charming young man, Fred," from mamma; "so clever and intellectual. He can speak Italian as well as he does English."

"You have made quite a conquest, mamma," said Phillis; "and so has he, it appears"—the slightest touch of irony in her tone.

And Mr. Brooke added that he really was a very good fellow—"My brother Ned in the Lancers, you know, thought no end of him."

And Phillis, in her own chamber that night, found that her boomerang had rebounded—rebounded and struck herself, with such force that she was prostrate—unable ever to stand again on her own old ground.

The coquette of Knollinghamshire owed to herself, with tears of wounded pride and anger, that she had lost her heart to a man who seemed to care nothing for her—less than nothing. Though she had done little but admire Thyrlé's deferential manner of devoting himself to a helpless old lady the whole evening, yet her heart had grown sick and weary as the time fled away, and he never sought an opportunity to say even a word to herself. She thought over everything he had ever said to her—his looks, his very tones; and, bitterly ashamed and humbled, she murmured—

"My punishment! He admires even my poor mother or simple little Kittie more than he does me! This is too hard to bear. I wonder—I wonder if Lord Ashley, and young Temple, and Captain Vane, and all or any of them in the time past, felt half the scorn of themselves or the anger at me that I feel now at myself and at Archer Thyrlé?"

The haughty belle, who had scorned titles and moneylike; who cared only for admiration and love, as it in some measure acted as balm on the crushed and wounded pride of old; who had never felt a ray of interest in any man, except to offer him as a sacrifice to that same miserable past; she had felt the conviction stealing over her the whole evening that she loved Archer Thyrlé, the

miner's son, as she had loved but once before in her life.

"People will say I encourage him for the sake of his money—Hasson has insinuated that already. As if I had not refused men with twice his wealth! I will be guarded. I should die of shame were he to suspect—or any one. But I will take care; I cannot be too cautious."

ANGUISH IN PRINT.

IN THE STRICTEST CONFIDENCE.

TEAR THE TENTH.

ONE OF MY SINS.

A DAY had passed—a long, long, dreary day, and a weary, weary night—during which I kept on starting up from sleep to think that I heard a voice whispering the word "Come!" Come, come, come—ah! the number of times I seemed to hear that word, and sat up in bed, pressing my hair from my ears to listen, to lie down again with a sigh—for it was only fancy. How could I go? What could I do? I dare not try to meet him, even though I had vowed that I would. I kept calling myself coward, but that was of no use, for I only owned to it and made no reply; though towards morning, after I had been picturing to myself his weary form leaning watchingly against a tree for hours, and then seemed to see him slowly going disappointed away, I made another vow that, come another night, spite of cowardice and anything else, I would go. And then, while I lay thinking of how shocking it would be, and all that sort of thing, I dropped off asleep, to be awakened by a curious buzzing noise, which was Patty Smith humming a tune—like some horrible great bluebottle—as she was dressing, for the bell had rung some time before.

And now the next night had come. It was so hot that I could scarcely breathe, and the tiresome moon would shine so dreadfully bright that it was like a great, round eye peering between the edge of the blind and the window, frame, to watch my proceedings. Clara was soon in bed, and breathing hard; while as for Patty Smith, she snored to that degree that I quite shivered. It must have been her snoring that made me shiver, for as to what I was about to venture, now that I could feel my mind fully made up, I was quite bold, though my heart would beat so loudly that

it went "thump, thump," under the heavy clothes. I had hurried upstairs first, and was lying in bed quite dressed, though I lay wondering whether those two would notice that my clothes were not lying by the bedside. I thought it never would be twelve o'clock, and I lay wondering what Achille would be doing. It was so romantic, now that I had passed the first feeling of dread, and seemed so much nicer than sitting up in bed in the dark to have a supper of cakes, sweets, and apples, as we used to at the old school when I was young. Ah, yes, when I was young!—for I felt old now. In another hour I should be down in the side walk, where the wall skirted the road. But suppose I were heard upon the stairs, or opening the side door or Clara should wake, or—

"Ah, you goose!" I exclaimed at last; "pray don't go if you are so much afraid."

But really it was enough to make any maiden's heart beat.

I had changed his note about from place to place, for I could not part with it, and I sighed at the very idea of locking it up in my box with the others; but I had it now, and I could feel the sharp corner prick every time I moved. I knew it every word by heart, down even to where it said, "Thine for ever;" and as I whispered it over to myself, I grew more and more excited, and longed for the time to slip by faster.

At last, though it seemed as though it would never come, I heard the church clock faintly striking twelve; and then I shivered again horribly with that dreadful Patty's snoring, for it was not likely I should have any foolish fancies about witching hours of midnight, or anything of that kind; and then I softly glided out of bed, and stood quite still for nearly five minutes, when, all remaining quiet, and the breathing of Clara and Patty coming regular, I stepped on one side of the bright pathway made by the moonbeams, made my way to the door, and gently turned the handle.

I never knew that door to be so noisy before, and I now really trembled; for, as the tiresome thing creaked, I could hear either Clara or Patty turn in bed, and I stopped quite short, expecting every moment to hear my name pronounced. But no—all was silence and snore, and I gently closed the door after me, and stood in the dark passage, with my heart almost failing; for I hardly dared stir a step farther, know-

ing, as I did, that in the next room slept the Fraulein, while the other two Graces were only a few steps farther down the passage. Somebody was breathing so hard that it was almost a snore, and it was not Patty Smith now; and more than once I was for going back, but I stole on at last, and reached the great staircase, where the moon was shining down through the skylight, and making queer shadows upon the wall. But I glided down, and was nearly at the bottom, when, looking up, I felt almost ready to sink—for, in the full glare of the moonlight, there stood a tall figure gazing down at me.

I did not shriek, nor turn to run away, for I had self-command enough to govern the emotions struggling for exit; though I wonder that I did not go mad with fear from the terror which came upon me, as I saw the tall, white figure come slowly gliding down—nearer, nearer, nearer; now in the moonlight, now in the deep shade. Oh, it was fearful! And, after all, to be candid, I believe the reason I did not scream out was because I could not; for my mouth felt hot and parched, and at times my head seemed quite to swim.

As I stood on one of the landings, and backed away from the coming figure, I felt the door of the little room where we hung our garden hats and mantles give way behind me, when I backed slowly in, pushed the door softly to, and then crept tremblingly into a corner, drawing a large shawl before me, but not without knocking down a hat from one of the pegs, to fall with, oh! such a noise, seeing that it was only straw. There I stood, almost without breathing, hoping that I had not been seen, and that the figure, whoever it was, would pass on.

Every second seemed turned into a minute, and at last I began to revive; for I felt that, whatever the figure was, it had passed on; and I drew a long breath of relief, thinking now that I must gain my own room at any cost, and the sooner the better, for of course any meeting was now impossible. I was just going to sigh deeply for poor Achille, when I felt, as it were, frozen again; for the door began to glide open, rustling, as it were, over the carpet—for everything sounded so horribly distinct—and there at last stood the tall white figure, while, as I felt ready to sink, I heard my name pronounced, in a low whisper, twice—

"Laura! Laura!"

For a moment or two I could not reply, when the call was repeated; and, irresistibly attracted, I went slowly forward from my hiding-place, to feel myself caught by the arm by Clara, who had been watching me.

"You cruel, wicked girl!" I exclaimed in a whisper. "How could you frighten me so?"

"Serve you right, too, you wicked, deceitful thing," she said. "Why could you not trust me? But I don't care. I know. I can see through you. I know where you are going."

"That you do not," I said, boldly; for I felt cross now the fright was over, and I could have boxed the tiresome creature's ears.

"You'd better not talk so loudly," she said, with a sneer; "that is, if you do not want Lady Blunt to hear your voice."

"There," I said, spitefully, "I thought you did not know."

"Under the tall elms by the garden wall," whispered Clara, laughing, and translating one of the sentences in the very note I had in my breast; and then I remembered that I had left it for about a quarter of an hour in my morning dress pocket, before I ran up after changing and fetched it down; though I never should have thought she would have been so treacherous as to read it. But there, she had me in her power, and however much I might feel disposed to resent her conduct, I could do nothing then, so—

"Hush!" I said, imploringly. "Pray, do not tell, dear!"

"Ah," said the nasty, treacherous thing, "then you ought to have told me, and trusted me with your secret. But did you think that I was blind, Laura Bozerne, and couldn't see what was going on? And you never to respond to my confidence, when I always trusted you from the very first. I did think that we were friends."

"Oh, pray don't talk so," I exclaimed; "nor yet so loudly, or we shall be heard." For it was not I who spoke loudly now.

"Well, and suppose we are," she said, coolly. "I can give a good account of my conduct, I think, Miss Bozerne."

"Oh, pray don't talk like that, dear," I said—"pray, don't." And then, feeling that all dissimulation was useless, I cast off the reserve, and so I exclaimed, catching her by both hands—"Oh, do help me, there's a darling; for he has been waiting for two nights."

"Yes, I dare say he has," said the deceitful creature; "but I don't mean to be mixed up with such goings on."

A nasty thing!—when I found out afterwards that she had more than once been guilty of the same trick; and all the while professing to have placed such confidence in me. If I had been free to act, I should have boxed the odious thing's ears; but what could I do then, but beg and pray and promise, and beg of her to be my friend, till she said she would, and forgave me, as she called it; and then I watched her go slowly upstairs till she was out of sight; for whatever she might do in the future, she declared that she would not help me that night.

And there I stood, in a state of trembling indecision, not knowing what to do—whether to go after her, or steal down to the side door; and at last I did the latter, if only out of pure pity for poor Achilles. And then I began slowly to unfasten the bolts.

The nasty things went so hard that I broke my nails over them, while I turned all hot and damp in the face when the crossbar slipped from my fingers, and made such a bang that I felt sure it must have been heard upstairs. And then I stood listening and trembling, and expecting every moment to hear a door open and the sound of voices. It was only the romantic excitement, or else sheer pity, which kept me from hurrying back to my own room, to bury my sorrows in my soft pillow.

I waited quite five minutes, and then tied my handkerchief over my head, and raised the latch. And then, the next moment, I stood outside in the deep shadow, with the water-butt on my right and the washhouse door on my left; and then, with beating heart, I glided from shrub to shrub, till I reached the wall, beneath whose shadow I made my way to the path that runs under the tall elms, and where the wall was covered with ivy.

In spite of my fluttering heart, and the knowledge I possessed of how I was committing myself, I could not help noticing how truly beautiful everything looked—the silvery moonlight, glancing through the trees; the deep shadows; and, again, the bright spots where the moon shone through the openings. And timid though I was, I could not help recalling Romeo and Juliet, thinking what a time this was for a love tale, and

regretting that there were no balconies at the Cedars. Then I paused, in the shade of one of the deepest trees, holding my hand to my side to restrain the beating of my heart, as I listened for his footstep.

"I'll only stay with him one minute," I said to myself, "and then run in again, like the wind."

A minute passed: no footstep. Two minutes, five, ten; and then I stole to the end of the walk. But there was no one; and I began to tremble with fear first, and then with excitement, and lastly with indignation; for it seemed to me that I was deceived.

"The poor fellow must have gone back in despair, believing that I should not come. Ah! he does not know me," I muttered.

"Perhaps I am too soon," I thought a few minutes later, "and he may yet come."

For I would not let the horrible feeling of disappointment get the upper hand. And then I crept closer to the wall, and waited, looking out from an opening between the trees at the moonlit house, and wondering whether Clara was yet awake.

All was still as possible. Not a sigh of the night wind, nor a footstep, nor even the rustle of a leaf; when all at once I nearly screamed, for there was a sharp cough just above my head. And as my heart began to beat more and more tumultuously than ever, there was a rustling in the ivy on the top of the wall, and a dark figure leaped to the ground, where I should have fallen had it not caught me in its arms.

I shut my eyes, as I shivered, half in fear and half with pleasure; and then I let my forehead rest upon my hands against his manly breast—for even in those moments of bliss the big buttons on his coat hurt my nose. And thus we stood for some few moments, each waiting for the other to speak; when he said, in a whisper—

"Better now?"

"Oh, yes," I replied; "but I must leave thee now, Achilles, à demain."

"Eh?" he said, with a huskiness of tone which I attributed to emotion.

"I must leave thee now," I said.

"How did you get out?" he whispered.

"By the side door," I said, trembling; for an undefined feeling of dread was creeping over me.

"Any chance of a taste of anything?" he whispered.

"Good heavens!" I ejaculated, opening my eyes to their widest extent, "who are you?"

And I should have turned and fled, but that he held me tightly by the wrist.

"Well, perhaps, it don't matter who I am, and never mind about my number," said the wretch. "I'm a pleeceman, that's what I am, county constabulary. Will that soot yer?"

"Oh, pray release me,"—I said, "oh, let me go!" I gasped; for I thought he might not understand the first, these low men are so ignorant. "Pray go to Monsieur de Cochonet, and he will reward you."

"That's him as I ketched atop of the wall, I suppose," said the creature. "My, how he did cut when I showed him the bull's-eye! Thought it was a cracking case, my dear; but I'm up to a thing or two, and won't split. But I say, my dear, how's Ann? And so you took me for him, did you? Well, I aint surprised, for most of your sect thinks something of me."

And then if the wretch didn't try to draw me nearer to him; but I started back, horrified.

"Well, just as you like, you know," exclaimed the ruffian. "But, I say, you'll let me drink your health, you know, won't you?"

"Oh, yes," I exclaimed, interpreting his speech into meaning "Give me a shilling," which I did, when he loosed my arm.

"That's right," he said. "I thought you were a good sort. Feel better now, don't you?"

"Oh, yes," I exclaimed. "Please let me go now."

"Let you go," he said, "to be sure. I was just going to offer you my advice, that you'd better step in before the old gal misses you. He won't come again to-night now, I scared him too much; so ta-ta, my dear—I won't spoil sport next time."

And then, almost before the wretch's words had left his lips, I fled, nor ceased running until I reached the back door, which I entered, closed, and fastened again; and then glided upstairs to my room, where Patty still snored and Clara watched; but my acts seemed all mechanical, and I can only well recollect one, and that was my throwing myself upon her breast, and bursting into tears.

At last I was once more in bed, my heart still beating tumultuously; and directly after

Clara crept in to my side, when it was of no use, I could not keep it in, for it did seem so kind and sympathizing of her, though I believe it was only to satisfy her curiosity. And then I had a good cry in her arms, and told her of all the terrors of that dreadful night; when instead of, as I expected, trying to console me, the nasty thing had the heart to say—

"Well, dear, it's all very well; but I should not like to be you!"

TEAR THE ELEVENTH.

REACTION.

I SUPPOSE it comes natural to people to feel sleepy at night; for I did not mention it before, but I had terribly hard work to keep awake on that night when I had such a horrible adventure, while soon after telling that unfeeling Clara all about it I fell asleep, and they had such a task to wake me when the bell rang. But I'm sure any one might have pitied my feelings upon that terrible morning. When I was thoroughly awake it was just as if there was a weight upon my mind, and for some time I could not make out what was the matter.

Then came, with a rush, the recollection of my adventure, so that I first of all turned crimson with shame, and then as white as a dreadful marble statue. For somehow things do look so very different of a night to what they do by broad daylight, and I do believe that, after all, one of the greatest of missionary efforts would be a more general diffusion of gas and electric lights; for I'm sure, if people are all made like me, we should not have been half so wicked if we had had two suns instead of a sun and a moon, and that half her time making no shine at all. I believe it's night that makes most people wicked; for fancy me going to meet Achille under the elms in broad daylight! Why, the idea is preposterous!

But oh! how bad, and wicked, and ashamed, and repentant, and conscience-smitten I did feel that morning. Oh! it was dreadful only to think of it, for months after. It seemed so horrible to me, how that I had rested my head against the buttons of that shockingly low wretch of a policeman's coat and not known the difference; while what Achille would have thought had he but known, I could not—nay, I dared not—think.

Then there was that Clara looking at me with such a dreadful mocking smile, that I

felt as if I could have turned her into stone—for she was oozing all over with triumph; and yet all the time I was so angry with myself, for I knew that I was completely in her power, as well as in that of the constable—a low wretch!—who might say anything, and perhaps tell the servants. And, by the way, who was Ann, that he had asked me about?

"Why," I exclaimed, trembling, "it must be Ann the housemaid; and I shall never dare to look her in the face again. Oh, Laura Bozerne," I said, "how you have lowered yourself!"

And then I had a quiet cry, and felt a little better.

But I felt very guilty when I went down, and every time I was spoken to I gave quite a start, and stared as if expecting that whoever spoke knew my secret; while during lessons, when a message came from Mrs. Blunt that she wanted to see me in the study, I felt as if I should have gone through the floor; and on turning my eyes to Clara, expecting sympathy, there she was actually laughing at me.

"If this is being in love," I said to myself, "I mean very soon to be out of it again;" and then I stood trembling and hesitating, afraid to stir.

"Did you hear the lady principal's summons, Miss Bozerne?" said that starchy Miss Furness, in her most dignified style.

I turned round, and made her a most elaborate De Kittville obeisance, and I saw the old frump toss her head; for I know she always hated me because I happened to be nice looking—mind, I don't say I was nice looking, for I am merely writing down now what people said who were foolish enough to think so. Achille once said I was—but there, I will not be vain.

So I crossed the hall, then to the study door, and stood with my hand raised to take hold of the white china handle; but just then I heard Mrs. Blunt give one of her little short, sharp, pecking coughs, such as she gave when muttering to herself to make up a scolding for some one. No sooner did I hear that cough than I dropped my hand down to my side, and stood hesitating upon the mat, afraid to enter; for who could help feeling a coward under such circumstances, I should like to know? It was very dreadful; and though I kept telling myself that I was not a bit afraid of Mrs. Blunt, yet somehow I

seemed to be, just then. However, I kept trying to make up my mind to bear it all, and to ask her pardon, and to promise that it should not occur again if she would not write to mamma; but my tiresome mind would not be made up, but kept running about from one thing to another, till I declare I almost felt ready to faint.

"Oh, Achille, Achille!" I murmured, "I must give you up. What I suffer for your sake! Oh, mon pauvre cœur!"

I felt better after that, for it seemed that I was to return to my old quiet state of suffering; and the determination not to run any more risks seemed to nerve me to bear the present suffering almost as much as the rustle of the Fraulein's silk dress upon the stairs. And of course I would not allow her to see me waiting at the door, and afraid to go in; so I tapped at the door, and entered.

There sat the lady principal, writing a letter, and frowning dreadfully—though she always did that when there was a pen in her hand; and as she just looked up when I entered, she motioned me to a chair with the feather end of the bead and silk adorned quill she held.

"Take a seat, Miss Bozerne," she muttered between her patent minerals, as we used to call them; and there I was, sitting upon thorns, metaphorically and really—for the chair I took had the seat all worked in roses and briars and cactus, while there was that tiresome old thing with the little glass dewdrop knobs at the end of the sprays in her cap, nodding and dancing about every time she came to a hard word.

"She is writing home, I know," I said to myself, "and then she means to take me back; for it must all be found out—and, oh dear! oh dear! what shall I do?"

And then I half felt as if I should like to run away altogether; and then I thought that if some one had been there all ready with a fly or a post-chaise, I would have gone with him anywhere.

Directly after I gave such a jump, for there was the crunching of a step upon the gravel sweep, and I felt the blood all flush up in my face again; for it was his step—his, and it seemed that he was to be brought in, and we were to be confronted, and there would be quite a dénouement; but then I felt as brave as could be, for was not he close at hand to take my part? and

I felt ready to say things that I could not have uttered, and to hear scoldings that would have killed me, five minutes before.

TABLE TALK.

A CHANGE has come over the scene in Holborn. Where once upon a time that greatest of human beings, man—does any lady object to this?—turned himself into a triton and swam, a floor was placed, and for a long time, as a dancing saloon, the Holborn Casino became notorious. Then, or rather now, comes the touch of the enchanter's wand: swimmers and dancers are bade go hence, for a smoking and steaming altar has been raised by the Knight of Crosby Hall—otherwise Mr. Frederick Gordon—to the gastronomic saints, Apicius and Helio-gabalus, holy men of the cook's calendar; and over this altar a goodly temple has been erected, whose decorated walls echo with the pleasant click of knife and fork, and ring of glass. In fact, we have now the Holborn Restaurant, a really handsome Continental building, where, for the same cost that one used to suffer to eat badly cooked viands from a shabby table, with our feet in sawdust, we can enter a palatial banqueting hall, and take our seat at an elegantly appointed table. Exotics load the air with their fragrance; an excellent band discourses sweet music; and, in the intervals, there is the silvery tinkle of water falling from jets in marble basins; while, like cool, shady glimpses of beauty, every here and there peers out some choice statue from amidst rich hangings, or the pleasant growing green of shrubs. This, then, is a fresh reform in our feeding arrangements. Will some enterprising Mr. Gordon attack the cabs, and let us ride in peace?

CATS! They have been written about, praised for their domesticity, reviled for their thievish propensities, abused for their noise. Only the other day a youth was sentenced to imprisonment for cruelty to a cat. The cat came and stole his pigeons, and at the first opportunity he struck at "poor" pussy with an iron rod, doubtless intending to kill the cat, but, unfortunately, merely so maiming it that the wretched animal was able to get away, bearing with it the marks of its punishment. If that cat had been poisoned or shot dead for its thefts, no one would have said a word.

"How about the poor pigeons?" as a boy said, and their torn and fluttering sufferings, pursued by the keen-clawed cat. But then, people say, it was the cat's nature to kill birds—ergo, then, the cat is not a domestic animal, but full of its wild propensities. In fact, we tolerate it for these same detrimental qualities. "She's such a good cat—kills rats and mice by the dozen." Who pities the rat, or the pretty little, bright-eyed mouse? Not a soul. The fact is, veil it as you may, the cat is a sleek, smooth, well-dressed, cruel hypocrite—tiger to the backbone; and if her Royal Highness the Duchess of Edinburgh, on the strength of coming from Russia, would only set for next winter a furry fashion that all our dear ones' dresses should be trimmed with catskin, she would be conferring a blessing upon suburban London. There they are—the inspirers of this note—really, six of them, walking in procession along the crown of a dwarf wall. There is a grey tabby, a tortoise-shell, one meant for white, a black and meant for white, a jet black, and a ginger. Those six beasts have within them the power of an organ; and the wild, Æolian airs they strike up at times are something awful. There is a prolonged intensity in that cry which reminds us always of the weird howl heard by the fugitives in the cavern in Cooper's tale, "The Last of the Mohicans." And the worst of it is that these six promenaders are only a deputation from the parent society, as they say in the country meeting bills for missions. But, hallo! pst! scamper, there they go! Bless kind Nature! she always gives the antidote with the bane. That's the dog that kept us awake three hours, howling at the full moon, three nights since. He is forgiven, for the brave way in which he charged and chivied those six sheath-clawed beasts from the wall, in spite of their arched backs, horrent jaws, glaring eyes, and bottle-brush tails. Good dog! Hi, then! We don't like dogs; but, Freya—Scandinavian goddess—and thy car, how we do hate cats!

All Contributions are attentively considered, and unaccepted MSS. are returned on receipt of stamps for postage; but the Editor cannot hold himself responsible for any accidental loss. No unaccepted MSS. will be returned until a written application has been made for them.

Terms of Subscription to ONCE A WEEK, free by post:—Weekly Numbers for Six Months, 5s. 5d.; Monthly Parts, 5s. 8d.

ONCE A WEEK

NEW SERIES.

No. 332.

May 9, 1874.

Price 2d.

JACK'S SISTER; OR, WOMANLY PAST QUESTION.

CHAPTER XXVII.

DETHRONED.



LIFTON

WAS far from looking on Enid's pretty little note of apology with Aunt Jane's equanimity. He had got up the

excursion himself, for the very purpose Enid had divined; and his mother

had been rather amused by the suppressed air of excitement with which he superintended the preparations, and his saucy promises to Miss Elliott—one of the blushing, gushing sort of damsels—that he would be very magnanimous, and allow Saumarez to be her cavalier during the whole ride.

Enid's letter came, and crushed all these innocent ebullitions in the bud. Lady Gore, with all her penetration, had hardly guessed how deeply her son felt on the subject, till she saw the sudden pallor spreading over his face as he read it.

"Not come! Nonsense!" he said, crushing up the letter irritably, and then as quickly smoothing it out again. "'School children.' Why, surely she can put the brats off. I'll ride over, and tell her she *must* come."

And before Lady Gore could remonstrate he was out of the house, his face glowing with eagerness, and the crumpled little note folded tenderly away in the left-hand pocket of his waistcoat.

"L'homme propose"—Enid had probably heard that proverb (which is not new), and made up her mind that Clifton should not have an opportunity for doing so on that day. His importunities found her stonily inflexible—hardly civil, indeed; as she did not even express any desire to go, and her manner was cold and guarded in the extreme.

Clif was horribly hurt. A woman of the world would have known how to put him off in the prettiest manner possible, and with so many charming little professions of regret, and so many unanswerable excuses, that he could not have thought her in fault, but rather as suffering from an equal disappointment with himself. Baby Delamayne could have done it skilfully enough to have sent him away more enamoured of her than ever; but, unfortunately, Enid was in no sense a woman of the world. She could do an unpleasant thing—even a seemingly rude and unkind thing—if she felt it to be right; but the very unwontedness of the act made her awkward and constrained in doing it, while the fear lest she should feel too deeply the vexation she was inflicting prevented her from expressing any feeling at all.

"Not to put too fine a point upon it," as our friend Mr. Snagsby saith, Miss Leyburn junior made herself very disagreeable on this occasion; and Mr. Gore, who was accustomed to nothing but the sweetest of smiles and softest of speeches from every woman he had ever honoured with his attention, felt proportionately huffed.

Even his good humour failed him at last, after a long course of short answers and obstinate refusals; and he took up his hat in a pet, saying that—

"He was very sorry he had wasted so much time and bored Miss Leyburn so severely about a mere trifle. It did not matter at all, really. His mother had fancied she might like the ride; but Colonel

Strahan's daughters had been wishing to go to the Abbey for some time, and were sure to make time for it. Very jolly girls they were, too."

"Yes, very nice. I've no doubt they will enjoy it," Enid answered, with polite indifference.

And Clif departed in a rage.

On the following day, about two o'clock on a lovely afternoon, Enid was seated in the hill school-room, teaching a very ragged class of very unruly little boys from the surrounding colony of navvies. The young lady's face was pale, and her usually bright manner so sobered and subdued, that more than one of her pupils had noted the change curiously, when, in the middle of a very unsatisfactory sum, which persisted in representing three times three as thirteen, the young lady beheld a phenomenon over the heads of the bigger boys at the end of the room which turned her face rosy red in a moment, and sent the slate pencil rattling to the floor.

This phenomenon consisted of a cockatoo tuft of gold, an appealing eye, and a beckoning finger, which flashed up like a jack-in-the-box whenever the boys' faces were all directed her way, and disappeared the moment one of them showed a sign of turning.

Obedying the mysterious summons, partly from curiosity and partly from fear lest her pupils should be scandalized by any unconventional intrusion in these sacred precincts, Enid went forth, still carrying the slate with its unreasonable calculations; and, on going into the little porch, found Clifton standing on the step, booted and spurred, and holding his horse by the bridle.

"How good of you to come out!" he cried, taking her hand eagerly, his manner warmer and more affectionate than usual. "I didn't see any one to hold my horse, and was afraid of disturbing your class by speaking. But you always are good, Enid; the best and kindest girl I know. Will you be kinder than ever now, and forgive me for yesterday's rudeness?"

"Forgive you!" Enid repeated, with one of her quick-coming, fast-fading blushes, and a sudden grateful warmth about a heart which had been feeling strangely sore and hurt all day.

"Yes, I know I don't deserve it. I don't deserve that you should ever speak to me

again after my abominable conduct. Positively being insolent; and to you, of all people in the world! Can you ever pardon it?"

"But you were not rude. It was I—at least, I know I seemed ungracious, when you were so kind."

And half unconsciously Enid put out her hand, child fashion. Clif grasped it cordially and held it.

"'Kind,' indeed! But that is your way of forgiving. I wish I could forgive myself as easily. Do you know, I never slept a wink last night thinking of it, and whether you would cut me altogether after such a disgraceful exhibition of temper."

He said it so much in earnest, biting his lip, and almost stamping in impatient annoyance with himself, that Enid fairly laughed.

"Clifton, how absurd you are—tormenting yourself for what no one else would notice! You don't mean to say you left the riding party for this?"

"Of course I do. Do you think I could have stood the remembrance of my own abominable selfishness all day? I slipped away at the cross-roads. 'A pressing appointment—Miss Elliott would excuse me' (wasn't she glad to?), 'and I would catch them up before they got to the Abbey.'"

"Which you won't, then, unless you ride very fast. Hurry, Clifton!"

She had forgotten, in this frankly boyish apology, the fright of the last few days, and was still laughing, the wind blowing about her soft brown hair and freshening the happy glow in her sweet face. Clifton looked at her with such a depth of wondering, loving admiration as brought recollection to her mind, and the long lashes in sudden confusion over her large eyes.

"Enid!" he began, hurriedly, and trying to take her hand again.

"You must not stay now, Clifton. Make haste, or you will never overtake them."

"But you have forgiven me?" he persisted, pressing forward as she retreated within the shelter of the school-room door. "I know you understand, and—and you have forgiven me?"

"Yes, yes—of course." She was nervously anxious to send him away now. "Good-bye, Clifton."

"Good-bye, my——"

He broke off, got her hand for one moment in a tight clasp, then dashed off,

sprang on his horse, and, clearing the low school wall, like a feather tossed into the air and back again, had galloped out of sight in another moment.

"He is not like any other man in the world. Oh! I hope he will not have an accident," Enid said to herself, with a sudden shiver of dread. And then she went back to the class and "three times three," demolished the intrusion of any thirteen in the product, and finished her duties with a cheerful interest and patience which deserved some credit, considering the agitated state of her mind. Unconsciously, however, the homely duty proved, as is often the case, its own reward; and when she went home in the evening, her mind was divided more placidly between Tommy Gurton's proficiency in spelling, Clifton's eagerness to make friends again, and Seth Green's drunken mother, than might have been expected from a young lady not yet twenty-three.

That evening she received another pleasure, and from a source where a less simple nature might only have derived annoyance.

Aunt Jane had come back enchanted with her drive, enchanted with Clifton, who (considering her merely as Enid's relation—blessed tie!) had paid her special and unremitting attention; and, under the influence of that enchantment, more than ever convinced of Clif's penchant for herself. Indeed, she could not help confiding to Enid that—

"She really—really feared he was a little—just a *little* taken. You see, my love, the girls of the present day are so frivolous; and so, perhaps, he can't help feeling a certain superiority. But of course it is only liking; so that I was sorry to see dear Lady Gore look uneasy. For of course a woman of my age knows how to waive such things without giving offence; and he did not say anything, you know. It was only his manner—so very prononcée; and that look in his eyes—I can't explain it. But you will know some day, my dear. Indeed, you may have seen it in your cousin's eyes; though he is so different—not half so candid in showing his heart in his looks."

So prattled Miss Leyburn, seated in a big arm-chair, and untying her bonnet strings, with a mildly self-complacent smile; the while Enid stood silently by, waiting to carry the said bonnet upstairs, and did not laugh.

So far from laughing, indeed, or even feeling amused, a soft blush of shame and pleasure spread over her face, and a light of shy, innocent wonder into her eyes, such as would have puzzled any one to translate; more especially any one looking at the wide difference in age between aunt and niece. And yet the explanation was easy enough. "La voici!"

"Aunt Jane thinks that Clifton is beginning to care too much for her. I have been thinking just the same of myself, and have been making myself wretched and disagreeable about it. She is mistaken, of course—any baby would see that; and why should not I be also? He has said nothing in particular to either of us. It is, just as auntie says, his manner and the look in his eyes. Oh, dear! how foolish we are! As if he could help being handsome and winning! Why, I have heard Jack often complain that Clif never can know a woman long without making love to her—that it was 'his way.' I suppose this is what he means. But how foolish of me to take it for anything serious. I am glad poor auntie has opened my eyes to my vanity. I am sure he was hurt the other day, though he was generous enough to take all the blame on himself, poor fellow! Well, I must make it up to him. I should be sorry he ever thought Jack's sister unkind or silly."

And, accordingly, next time that Clif called, Enid's manner wore all its native candour and sweetness—a marked cordiality, indeed—which, if Aunt Jane had not been present, would have urged him to risk his fate on the spot; for he remembered his last words at the schools, and took her manner as a tacit encouragement; while she was simply happy in having replaced their friendship on its old footing, and eager to tell him of all their preparations for Miss Delamayne, who, it seemed, was expected that same afternoon.

"She comes by the five o'clock train; and Jack and I are going to the station to meet her. I shall stay in the pony carriage outside, that he may have the first look; but you can't think how excited I feel, and I have been taking so much trouble to make her room nice."

"Happy girl," said Clifton, wishing that it was his room which was thus honoured. "I only hope she'll deserve it."

"So do I," remarked Aunt Jane. "Jack

never cares to talk about her; and what I have heard of her letters seems rather childish. By the way, I have forgotten to give orders about the maid who is to wait on her. Will you excuse me one moment, Clifton?"

And with a little nod and smile, Miss Leyburn trotted away.

Clifton saw his opportunity, and seized it. Coming straight over to Enid, he sat down beside her, and said, in the very simplest and plainest manner—

"Enid, I have been trying day after day to summon up courage to tell you something. I think you know what it is. You must have seen how long I have loved you, and I want you to try to——"

He choked a little in his eagerness, and Enid interrupted him.

"Clifton, don't—pray, pray don't say any more!"

She had tried to check him before; but the sudden revulsion of feeling drove the blood back from her heart, and struck her white and dumb for a moment. Now she stood up, putting out her hands in eager deprecation. He rose too, pale with pained astonishment.

"Have I vexed you, Enid? Perhaps I ought to have chosen my time better? But oh, my darling!—forgive my calling you so—but I have waited so long, and I thought you did like me a little, unworthy as I am. But who could be worthy of you? Not I."

"Don't, please," she begged, still keeping him off with outstretched hands. "I do like you very much. You are worthy of any woman; but—but—"

"But you can't love me? Not well enough to be my wife? Oh! Enid, don't say that."

And he caught her hands, a world of entreaty in his dark blue eyes. She tried to snatch them from him, her cheeks aflame.

"No, I can't love you. Of course I cannot. Perhaps I ought to have told you—I am engaged already."

"Engaged!"

It sounded more like a dull echo than his bright voice.

"Yes, long ago, to Merle."

She had told all now; but her very heart died before the storm of incredulity and anger which swept over that white, chiselled face like an electric flash.

"Merle!—that cousin of yours! Impossible!" Then, with another quick tran-

sition, "Oh! I beg your pardon, but you must be joking—teasing me. Do say you are. Enid, it *can't* be true."

She drew herself up a little, resenting the depreciatory tone accorded to her lover; but answered gently, in pity to his rival's agitation—

"I wish you had known; but it was just before dear papa's death; and we knew it must be such a long time of waiting that he—all of us, indeed—thought it better not to say anything. I am very sorry. I hope you know that, and will forgive me."

There was no mistaking earnest for jest this time. Clifton, watching every change of her face with anxious, beautiful eyes, read his doom there all too clearly; and turned away to the window, too broken even for speech.

Enid sat down again, and said nothing either. Standing and speaking seemed equally difficult just then. She had enough to do to keep from bursting out crying, and never thought how unfeeling her silence sounded. Clifton did. When he turned round, his face was changed—set in a stern, haughty mould, which gave it more than ever the look of a statue, and chilled Enid's throbbing heart strangely.

"I suppose I must believe it, since you bid me," he said, coldly. "I dare say you think me very childish; but a man may be excused for feeling sceptical when he sees his life's idols shattered in a moment. You were my idol. I almost worshipped you, you seemed so far above me. And to think that you could have seen me loving you more day by day, and trying my very best to win you, when all the while you were engaged to another fellow, and could have stopped me by a word."

"Clifton," she pleaded, tearfully, "I did not see—I did not think—I mean, Jack had told me of your other—that you did not mean—"

She stopped short, reddening.

"I am much obliged to Jack," Clifton answered, ironically. "You looked on my love for you, then, merely as an amusing instance of what he had told you: probably spoke of it to Kinnardson—*him*, above all men! Oh, God! to think of you throwing yourself away on such—"

"Clifton!" It was not a meek voice this time. She spoke coldly and proudly, and there was a red flush in either cheek as she stood up for the man who was to be her

husband against the man who might have been her love. "You forget yourself, and are unjust. Do not forget me too; and that the gentleman you speak of is my cousin, and my nearest and dearest friend."

It was a brief rebuke; but coming from one so gentle usually, and uttered with so much dignity, Clifton felt it to the core.

"I had forgotten both," he answered, flushing hotly, "and I apologize very sincerely. Will you let me bid you good-bye now? If I stay longer, I shall perhaps offend again."

He had taken up his hat, and was going. Well for all if he had! But Enid had been repressing herself too long and too harshly already, and this cold bow and colder apology were like the last straw on the camel's back.

Putting out her hands with a quick, impulsive gesture, she arrested his departure by a word, spoken with eyes full of unshed tears, and lips quivering so much that the sense was nearly lost.

"Clifton, please do not go away in anger. I am very, very sorry—I would have given anything that this had not happened; but indeed I never gave a thought to your really caring for me, except as one of our oldest friends—Jack's friend—until a week ago. Try and forget it now. Don't let this—this mistake rob us of your friendship. You do not know how we all love and value you here. It would be the bitterest grief to Jack if anything should make you less at home in his house, especially now, when he is looking forward to introducing you to his future wife. Don't let me spoil his happiness, and rob him of his companion. Promise me, Clifton, that this shall be as if it had never been."

The rich, yellow sunlight from the open window fell full upon her, softening the curves of her tall, rounded figure, flooding the pale, pure face with golden light, and bringing out every delicate line and moulding about the tender finish of mouth and chin. Clifton felt the inexpressible soul beauty of the picture growing into his soul. His heart, artist-like, took comfort from the present loveliness of the woman who had humbled him. He hesitated, but not from resentment; rather from his superior knowledge of the world, and his sense of the impossibility of either ceasing to love such a woman, or of paining her by the betrayal of such failure. Then, in one moment, a word

she had said occurred to him, and his whole face changed to marble again.

"I beg your pardon," he said, slowly; "you said you did not guess anything till a week ago. That was the day we were under the walnut tree. You *did* guess then?"

"Yes," she faltered, colouring painfully. This going back was very cruel; but he had no mercy.

"You knew it. Yes, I saw you did. No stories of Jack's shook your faith then. You read it in my manner; and you were right. Forgive me if I read yours as closely. The knowledge, new or old, gave you pleasure that day. Am I not right?"

She gave him one imploring look; then covered her eyes with her hands. How answer this question without betraying Merle's dignity, as centred in his betrothed?

"You acknowledge it," he said, very sadly. "Well, I will not ask you the reason. It could not have been any liking for me, or you would have then and there put me out of my pain. Neither will I ask why, since then, your manner has changed from cold to warm—first throwing me back; then after our meeting at the schools, when I certainly gave you sufficient proof of the strength of my feelings, meeting me with such encouraging warmth and sweetness that—"

His voice was breaking.

Aunt Jane's step was heard on the stairs outside.

"Forgive me," he said, in an altered tone, the quiet manner of a merely courteous acquaintance. "I have been ill-bred enough not to answer your request. Most certainly, if you wish it, I will make no difference in my intimacy here. If my coming will give you no pain, it certainly ought to cause me none. For the rest, I need not assure you that no word or look of mine shall ever remind you of the mistake I have so unwittingly made. I am obliged to you for passing it over."

It was the pledge Enid had asked for; yet as Clifton gave it, something, some inward instinct, warned her that perhaps it had been better left unsaid—better, even for his sake, that the friendship were dropped entirely for a time. But, then, Jack—poor Jack!—what would he do without his fidus Achates to make the house gay? She was too innocent to see possibilities of evil in the future, and she could not excuse her

late kindness without betraying Aunt Jane's folly; but even this mysterious anxiety added to her weight of sadness, and made her quiet "Thank you" fall coldly, if not indifferently, on her suitor's ears.

Perhaps even now she might have found a word of comfort and explanation; but Clif had already erred once against gentlemanly etiquette, and would not trust himself to risk a second offence. He had been refused. His clear duty, therefore, at present, was to go.

Which accordingly he did.

Another moment, and the door had closed behind him. Enid had lost her lover: not only his corporal presence, which was nothing; nor the actual love itself, which, say what romancers will, is seldom killed in a moment; but the spiritual essence of love—the intellectual worship of the ideal intellect and spirit of a woman, as separated from her outward form and manner. That died in the moment that her eyes shrank from his. Enid Leyburn had lost her power in that one act. She could never be quite the same again.

OUR ELECTION.

BY A CANADIAN SETTLER.
IN TWO PARTS.—PART II.

IT had been arranged, some days previously, that from Raymondville the two families should proceed to the village en masse; and now, in order to accommodate as many as necessary, Mr. Raymond brought out, for us the large sleigh, in which the entire party, with the exception of Ned and Agnes, were to accomplish the remainder of the journey. These two were to follow on horseback.

No time was lost in taking our seats in the sleigh, and the whole of the buffaloes were required to make all snug and tight. Despite his efforts to conceal the satisfaction he really felt with the arrangements for the journey, Ned's countenance was radiant with smiles. Agnes, too, was nothing loth to take her appointed place; and as Ned hastened to assist her to mount, the mischievous twinkle in her bright eyes plainly indicated her intention to enjoy herself on the road.

"I am afraid I shall prove but dull company, Mr. Ned," she remarked, stooping to pat the neck of her handsome little French mare.

"Well, really, Miss Raymond," replied Ned, "if you commence the journey in such a melancholy strain, I shall collapse at once; but take heart, for when our conversation flags, we will have a race until some new topic is started."

"Novelty is not always desirable."

A scarce audible sigh followed the rejoinder.

"We are of one opinion there," said Ned, in a bantering tone; "and the most undesirable novelty which occurs to me just now is the absence of life and spirit in Miss Raymond."

At this juncture, Mr. Raymond—who had taken the ribbons in hand after seeing us properly fixed in the sleigh—called out cheerily, "All aboard?" And looking round to make sure that all were aboard, he touched the horses gently with his whip, and away we sped noiselessly down the road, to the lively jingling of the sleigh bells.

As we approached our destination, friend Raymond urged forward the horses; and, with a grand dash over the bridge, we entered the village with all the éclat of a four-in-hand team on the first day of the season.

Mrs. Buckley, who had watched our progress down the hill, stood ready to welcome us; and she at once conducted Mrs. Raymond, Lucy, and my wife into the house.

As might have been anticipated, our rear-guard contrived to be very much in the rear; but at last they came trotting up with an assumed air of nonchalance, which, when contrasted with their heightened colour, sufficiently indicated the unusually interesting nature of their late conversation.

Leaving the ladies under the protection of Mrs. Buckley, we four electors drove on to the Anglo-American; and having seen the horses well stabled by the "civil and attentive ostler"—so described in Tom Harding's advertisement in the local *News Letter*—we turned into a spacious room, the largest in the hotel—or, indeed, the village. The bare, plastered walls were unadorned by anything save damp-discoloured patches, and the marks of many greasy shoulders; while a small, rough-hewn side table and a few primitive-looking chairs constituted the whole of the furniture. Nevertheless, the great log fire which blazed and crackled on the open hearth, in good old English style, lent an air of cheerfulness to the place that would have reconciled us to a very desert.

The room, on account of its size, was well

adapted for the business in hand; and within its walls some thirty or forty electors had already assembled from various parts of the township.

Scarcely had we shown ourselves, when, hawk-like, four of the candidates—viz., Dan Buckley, Tom Harding, Crawley, and Pearson (the last-mentioned a well-to-do settler, who had an aspiring mind)—swooped down upon us, button-holed—or rather, collared—and solemnly carried us off to the opposite side of the room.

Before entering upon the real business of the day, our captors proceeded with much gravity to decorate each of us with a gaily coloured favour. This little attention was received by us very graciously, although with perfect indifference as to the tint of the ribbon.

Dan then mildly supposed that a horn of whiskey would be acceptable. We guessed it would; and as there was an abundant supply of liquor on the little side table close by, the suggestion was acted upon without further delay.

These preliminaries being settled, our friends the candidates—each of whom professed himself confident of our support—assumed their most insinuating manner, and entered into lively conversation with us; at the same time, losing no opportunity of ascertaining for a certainty the manner in which our votes were to be distributed.

However, Uncle John saved them a world of trouble by confidentially assuring Tom Harding that he (Tom) and Dan were the men of our choice.

Tom and the old man, having exchanged snuffs, had at once come to an excellent understanding; and now, after this announcement of our intentions, a firm friendship was established between them.

In the meantime, Crawley had drawn me aside from the others, evidently bent upon landing at least one of our party in his net. The anxiety he exhibited concerning the welfare of my little wife was extremely affecting. He appeared to be overflowing with love for the whole human race, but for us more especially; and never until then did I suspect what a benevolent heart throbbed beneath the cobbler's rough exterior.

With an effort, I escaped from the little fellow and rejoined my friends, who were now awaiting the first opportunity to go up to the school-house, for the purpose of ex-

ercising their rights and privileges as free and independent electors.

The school-house, which, for the time being, was utilized for election purposes, stands upon a slight eminence near the road, some five hundred yards out of the village. It is a heavy, rectangular, log building, with walls somewhat low, and having a well-shingled, overhanging roof. On the side facing the road, a small porch relieves the monotony of the long, plain wall; while, a few yards from the end of the house, the usual stack of cordwood is piled up for winter use.

A large sleigh had been specially engaged to carry the electors in batches from the hotel, and return with as many as cared to avail themselves of the convenience. Whenever the sleigh was ready to leave, a large hand-bell was rung; and amid shouts of "All aboard for the school-house!" there invariably ensued an exciting rush, and a scramble for seats. Presently, at the usual signal, we joined a party who were tumbling out of the door, and scrambled into the sleigh as best we could. Mr. Raymond displayed wonderful activity for a man of his years; and, when safely seated, he hauled Uncle John to a place by his side. We young fellows were, of course, thoroughly in our element, and enjoyed the fun immensely. We might have indulged in a little snowballing; but, unfortunately for that exhilarating pastime, the snow here is too coarse and dry, and will not hold together.

The sleigh had now a full load, and there was not an inch of spare room; some were standing and clinging to each other for support, while those who had the good fortune to be seated dangled their legs over the side, bespattering with snow all who ventured near them.

The driver now took his seat, and, with a loud "Hurrah!" from the whole company, we scoured away out of the village and up the hill to the school-house. We had only run a short distance, however, when, as might have been expected from the overcrowded state of the sleigh, three of the passengers lost their equilibrium, and fell head foremost into the snow. It was really too bad of us, but all who contrived to hold on to their places laughed long and heartily at this mishap.

On our arrival at the school-house, the sleigh was cleared in an instant; and, after

shaking the snow from our mocassins, we passed through the porch, and immediately found ourselves in the august presence of the retiring reeve—Mr. McIntyre—whose duty it was to superintend the registration of votes. At the upper end of the room, Mr. McIntyre was seated in the "school marm's" chair, engaged in earnest conversation with two of his friends, who occupied places on a bench at his right hand; while on his left stood several village notables, among them being a Mr. Swann—a pushing but unscrupulous character, who was "running" against McIntyre for the reeveship. A number of settlers, who had come from distant parts of the township, strolled about the room, or reclined on the children's benches, waiting to have a chat with any friends who might come up from the village.

No sooner did McIntyre notice our entrance into the room, than he came forward and gave us a hearty welcome.

"Why, Mr. Walton!" he exclaimed, seizing Uncle John by the arm, "you are the last man I should have expected to see here to-day."

"Indeed," said uncle; "how's that?"

"Well," replied McIntyre, "I guess the snow-storm which we had this morning would have scared many a younger man; but how well you look after it!—in fact, almost as smart as our friend Raymond here. Ah, Ned, I am glad to see you here, and your brother too," and he shook hands heartily all round.

"What's the state of the poll?" inquired uncle, as soon as he could get a word in.

"Oh, we're pegging away," replied the reeve. "Just come and have a look at the sheet."

With that, we followed him towards the seat he had just left. Here he took the list of votes, and, running his fingers down the columns—headed with the names of McIntyre, Harding, Buckley—turned exultingly towards us—

"There, gentlemen," he said, "I guess we're in the right track; what do you say?"

"Well," remarked Mr. Raymond, smiling, "we are coming up considerably. However, let us add our signatures, and make room for our friends in the village; there are several sleigh-loads to come yet, and they will be here presently."

We then subscribed our names—a serious matter with uncle, judging from the deliberate air with which he took a pinch of snuff

—and afterwards strolled about the room, to have a "crack" with any of our particular acquaintances who might be present. Several times, Uncle John was pleasantly reminded that he had not yet removed his cap; but he could not see the necessity for uncovering his head in the presence of a mere backwoods reeve. In fact, this was too good an opportunity to be lost of expressing his contempt for backwoods society generally. However, as he is considered a privileged character, this little breach of etiquette was allowed to pass.

The sleigh continued to arrive, at short intervals, with cargoes of noisy, excited settlers, who, with the long bush call, gave ample notice of their approach. But whatever the noise and hubbub outside, every man conducted himself quietly indoors, and recorded his vote in a businesslike manner.

It was now time to enter upon the discussion of that important item in any day's business—dinner; consequently we jumped into the sleigh as it was about to return to the village, and in a few minutes reached the hotel. We could not have arrived at a more opportune moment, for the dinner was just being served in the large room. A complete transformation had taken place here during our absence; the room had been cleared of all strangers, and a long table placed in the centre, covered with a snow-white cloth which would have done credit to any first-class English hotel. Down either side the table the visitors were seated on benches—chairs being scarce in this house; and as there were only a few vacant places, we filled them without delay.

The keen, frosty air had given us all most ravenous appetites, and we turned with hungry eyes towards the smoking dishes which had just been placed upon the table. At one end, Tom himself officiated; and it was a real treat to witness the determined manner in which he wielded the carving knife—the haunch of venison before him being quickly reduced to a mere fragment. Mr. Raymond was elected by acclamation to the chair at the lower end, and he operated upon a monster goose so effectively, that in "less than no time" all claims upon him were satisfied to the utmost.

Without ceremony or hesitation we fell to, and for a time found ourselves too well occupied to discuss anything apart from the viands before us. But the calm was only of

short duration; for, as one after another relinquished his plate to the hired girl in attendance, the tempest of tongues grew louder and stronger, until at last it reached an ear-splitting and brain-distracting climax. We four, being the latest arrivals from the school-house, were so besieged with questions as to the state of affairs when we left, that we were impatient to escape from our troublesome friends. We had not long to wait for release. Rapidity in eating is characteristic of Canadians as of our neighbours the Yankees, and by the time the first course would have disappeared from an Old Country table, the dinner was over, and the guests dispersed in all directions.

At Ned's suggestion, we turned up the street towards Dan Buckley's, with the intention of spending a little time there before going home. We introduced ourselves without warning to Mrs. Buckley and her guests; and, on seeing us, the old lady threw up her hands in surprise, exclaiming—

"Oh! Mr. Raymond, speak of the—"

"E-exactly, Mrs. Buckley—but don't!" interrupted our friend, placing his hand gently on her arm.

"Well, well," she resumed, "then, setting jesting aside, do you know we have been having *such* a dispute as to who should be elected reeve—McIntyre or Swann; and I have just settled the matter by declaring that you are the only man in the township fit for the post."

Mrs. Buckley having unburdened herself thus far, looked round the room as though challenging contradiction.

"Now, that's scarcely fair, Mrs. B.!" exclaimed a shrill voice from one corner of the room, "because Mr. Raymond wasn't in the question, any way; and I do say, as I said before, as no man of mine shall ever vote for one like Swann, that has never cleared a stick in the township, and has neither chick nor child to look after."

The voice belonged to the better and bigger half of Crawley; and she is always fearfully in earnest—so the cobbler says, and he ought to know. Several other excitable members of the party were now just on the point of resuming the dispute which our sudden appearance had interrupted, when, fortunately, a renewal of the wordy conflict was averted by Mr. Raymond, who,

turning to our hostess, said in his blindest manner—

"I ought to feel extremely grateful for your good opinion, Mrs. Buckley; but, unfortunately, it comes too late to be of any present service."

"Well, well," she replied, "it is one that will keep until the next election, as you shall see."

"Then, in that case," rejoined our neighbour, pleasantly, "for the present we will put election matters away, and enjoy ourselves for an hour or so."

Some twelve or fifteen wives and daughters of the settlers had accepted Mrs. Buckley's invitation to her "patching bee;" and now that peace was restored among them, their needles flew through the work at a speed that augured well for the completion of patches sufficient for a quilt to cover even the Great Bed of Ware. Of course we intruders made ourselves useful and agreeable—an easy task for men of such experience as Uncle John and Mr. Raymond. Ned quickly gravitated towards the corner in which Agnes was plying her needle—and, apparently, he was quite at home there; indeed, a telegraphic communication had been established between them immediately after we entered the room.

The afternoon seemed unaccountably short, and, much sooner than we desired, we were obliged to take leave of our hospitable hostess. While the ladies of our party prepared themselves for the homeward journey, I went down to the hotel, saw the horses put to, and brought up the sleigh to the door. Night had now closed in, and the cold was so intense that we required every rug and buffalo at our command. This time, Mr. Raymond took a place with the others in the body of the sleigh, and I occupied the driver's seat. It was thought desirable that, after setting the Raymond family down at their own place, we should take the sleigh on to Hemlock Creek; and that Ned should return with it in the morning, and bring home our own conveyance. This arrangement was the more convenient, as it obviated the necessity of changing places on the road—an important consideration with the thermometer at 40 degrees below zero.

Agnes preferred returning home as she had left—on horseback; consequently, she and Ned brought up the rear, as in the

morning. Very little conversation was indulged in on the road, and the words spoken were uttered in muffled tones from beneath the warm buffaloes. Even Nellie's voice was silent; while Ned and Agnes rode quietly behind—happy, no doubt, in each other's society. At Raymondville we shouted a hearty "Good night" after our friends, as they hurried from the sleigh into the house, and then pushed on towards our own solitary domicile. Fortunately for us, the sky was cloudless, and the stars shone brilliantly—as stars in Canada always do—affording us sufficient light by which to travel in perfect safety. The glorious aspect of the star-spangled heavens had, however, but little effect on us—our whole interest being absorbed in the one object of reaching home.

On arriving at the grand old Junction Pine, Ned and I, in unison, sang out a long, shrill "Yo-ho!—oh!" greatly fearing it would fail to reach the ears of our sleepy-headed Dick. Our suspicion was for once misplaced; for presently the woods were echoing to the weird howl of the wild cat—Dick's favourite call—and immediately afterwards came the double report of a rifle. It was evident from this that Dick was unusually wide-awake, and we hastened forward to learn the cause of the phenomenon. An explanation was soon forthcoming. As we passed into the clearing, and approached the house, the savoury odour of roast pork and fried potatoes was wafted gently towards us—exciting our already frost-sharpened appetites, and making us more than ever impatient to be comfortably fixed indoors.

The possibility of Dick Beef turning cook had never been dreamt of in our philosophy; and, when we halted at the door, Nellie only gave expression to the surprise we all felt, by exclaiming, as he bustled out of the house to our assistance—

"Why, Dick! not asleep, and supper laid!—who has been here?"

Dick gave a knowing grin, and merely replied—

"I guess I haven't watched you the last twelve months for nothing, missus; but just hurry up, or supper will be cold."

So leaving Dick to stable the horses without any further question, we "hurried up," and at once commenced a spirited attack on the meal so unexpectedly prepared for us. Full justice was done by all to the pork and potatoes, and Uncle John declared that even

his toothless gums had done him good service that night. Supper over, we felt curious to hear from Dick why he had been so unusually industrious; and in reply to Nellie's repeated inquiries, he at last, after taking a long breath, began—

"Well, you see, I was lying asleep on the table this afternoon, and darned if I didn't dream as I was chopping a big maple; and little Crawley came up and told me he had stood for reeve, and been returned. Now, you know, I never could stand Crawley, ever since I got my last pair of long boots from him—they were as rotten as a punky stump—and when he told me this, says I, 'If there's no better man in the township than a little shrunk fellow like you for reeve, it's time for me to quit. I then aimed a tremendous blow at the maple, but missed it, and fell head over heels from the table. I felt so riled at the dream, that I didn't care to try another; so to fill up time, I just fired up and fixed the supper.'"

"And I couldn't have done it better myself, Dick," said Nellie, approvingly.

There was something so comical about the indignant air with which Dick related his dream, that we positively roared with laughter when he had concluded; and Dick himself soon joined in our merriment. We then gave him the latest news from Hardington; and, after toasting our feet at the stove for half an hour, retired for the night.

Next morning, Ned went down to Raymondville with the large sleigh, and returned with our own. This was a good half-day's work; indeed, Ned says it is the best day's work he has done these many years. When asked for an explanation, he only answers with a mysterious "You'll see." We think we do see already; for Mrs. Raymond tells us that Agnes makes a similar reply when they ask her what she and Ned found to talk about so long and confidentially that morning.

We had the satisfaction of hearing, a few days after the election, that McIntyre had been re-elected by a large majority; also that Dan Buckley and Tom Harding "won at a canter." Little Crawley and the other unsuccessful candidates, in spite of their present defeat, console themselves with the reflection that they may have "better luck next time;" while we up at Hemlock Creek only trust that the next election may be spent as enjoyably as the last.

ANGUISH IN PRINT.

IN THE STRICTEST CONFIDENCE.

TEAR THE TWELFTH.

TORMENTED.

"A H! there's Monsieur Achille!" said Mrs. Blunt—and now I felt as if it must be coming; but no, the tiresome old thing still kept me upon the thorns of suspense; while I heard the front door open and his step in the hall, the opening and closing of a door, and I felt as if I could have rushed to meet him and tell him of the horrible state of fear that I had been in; besides which, I knew that he would have a *corrected exercise* to return me, and I was burning to see what he would say.

"And now, Miss Bozerne," said Mrs. Blunt, laying down her pen, and crossing her hands upon the table, so as to show her rings, while she spoke in the most stately of ways—"and now, Miss Bozerne, I have a crow to—er—er—I have, that is to say, a few words to speak to you concerning something that has lately, very lately, come to my ears; and you know, my dear, that I have extremely long ears for this sort of thing."

And then she tried to draw herself up, and look august; but the vulgar old thing only made herself more common and obtrusive, while I began to tremble in the most agitated manner.

"Miss Furness tells me, Miss Bozerne—" she continued.

"Oh, how came she to know, I wonder?" I thought to myself.

"Miss Furness tells me," she said again, "of various little acts of insubordination, and want of attention to lessons and the instruction she endeavours to impart—to impart, Miss Bozerne; and you must understand that in my absence the lady assistants of my establishment are to have the same deference shown them as I insist upon having paid to myself."

And then she went on for ever so long about delegated authority, and a great deal more of it, until she had worked herself into a regular knot, with her speech all tangled; when she sent me away to the French lesson. And how can I describe my feelings! I don't remember who that was that put iron bands round his heart to keep it from breaking with sorrow, while they all went off, crack! crack! one after

another, afterwards from joy; but I felt, when I left Mrs. Blunt's room, precisely as that somebody must have felt at that time.

To have seen the dignified salute which was exchanged, no one could have thought it possible that a note had ever passed between Monsieur Achille and poor me. When I took my seat at the bottom of that long table, being the last arrival, not a look, not a glance—only a very sharp reprimand, which brought the tears in my eyes, because my exercise was not better; while my translation from English into French was declared to be affreux. Oh! it did seem so hard, after what I had risked for him the night before; but I soon fired up, for I saw Miss Furness looking quite pleased and triumphant; for I'm sure the old thing was as jealous as could be, and watched me closely, and all because I would not creep to her, and flatter and fawn, like Celia Blang; so I would not show how wounded I was, nor yet look at Achille when he went away, so that there was no communication at all between us that day.

I felt very much hurt and put out, for that Miss Furness spared no pains to show her dislike to me; and she must have had some suspicion of me, for during many lessons I never had an opportunity of enjoying further communication with dear Achille than a long look. Miss Sloman, as I have said before, had always hated me; but she was too much of a nobody to mind. However, I would not notice Miss Furness's cantankerousness, for I really did not mind a bit about her having told Mrs. Blunt, so delighted was I to feel that the other matter had not been found out; and I went on just the same as usual, and really worked hard with my studies.

One morning—I can't say when, for though I have tried I really can't recollect, and the time, names, and things are so mixed up together—however, it was a fine morning, and we were going for one of those dreary morning two and two walks, crawling in and out of the Allsham lanes like a horrible Adam-tempting serpent. I had taken great pains with my dress, for I thought it possible that we might pass Achille's lodging, as I fancied he had been unnecessarily angry and coo wi me at the last lesson, I wished him to feel a little pain in return, for I was determined not to give him a single look. Mamma had just sent me down one of the prettiest

straw-coloured areophane bonnets imaginable—a perfect zephyr, nothing of it at all hardly—and it matched capitally with my new silk; whilst the zebra parasol seemed quite to act as a relief. So I put them on, with new straw kid gloves, took the parasol, and then—call it vanity if you like—I stopped and had one last, triumphant glance in the mirror that hangs at one end of the long passage before I went down.

Mrs. Blunt was going with us that day; and, in spite of the late scolding I had received, she was quite smiling and pleasant with me, and I saw her bestow one or two satisfied glances upon my attire—for she never found fault with her pupils for dressing too well. But I did not take pains with myself so as to please her, and act as show card for her nasty old establishment. So I would not look pleased, but pretended that I had not yet got over the scolding, and was dreadfully mortified, as I went and took my place beside Clara.

As we were the two tallest girls, we always went first, and had our orders to walk slowly once more, on account of half a dozen children who came last with the teachers and Mrs. Blunt herself, and so we filed out of the gates and along the beautiful green lane.

No one could help feeling happy and light-hearted upon such a beautiful bright morning, especially as we turned through the fields, and went across towards the river. The trees were so green, and the grass shining with flowers, birds singing, the sky above a splendid azure, and all around looking so lovely; while the soft, delicious air fanned one's cheek, so that I could not help agreeing with Clara when, after a long silence, she heaved a deep sigh, and said—

"Oh, how delightful it is to feel young and be in love."

Though, after all, I was not so sure about that last part, for I did not feel half satisfied concerning my *affaire de cœur*, and was strolling somewhat listlessly along, when Clara pinched my arm.

"Here they come," she whispered.

And sure enough, there were Achille and the Signor coming towards us; when, I could not help it, all my ill-humour seemed to dart out of my eyes in a moment, and I could do nothing but sigh, and feel that I was a hopeless captive.

As I said before, I could not help it, and was obliged to close my eyes, when a horri-

ble jerk brought me to myself; when there, if Clara had not let me step right into the ditch beside the path—a dreadful stinging-nettley place—instead of quietly guiding me, when she might have known that my eyes were shut; while before I could extricate myself, if Achille was not at my side, helping me out and squeezing my hand, so that really, out of self-defence, I was obliged to return the pressure.

"Miss Bozerne," exclaimed Lady Blunt, pressing up to me, "how could you?"

I did not know, so I could not reply; while there were Miss Furness and the Fraulein—fat, hook-nosed old owl—looking as spiteful as could be.

"She did it on purpose," I heard Miss Furness whisper; while the Fraulein nodded her head ever so many times, so that she looked like a bird pecking with a hooked beak.

"Mademoiselle is not hurt, *I hope?*" said Achille, in his silkiest, smoothest tones; and there was so much feeling in the way he spoke, that I quite forgave him.

"Oh, no, not at all, Monsieur Achille," said Lady Blunt.

And then, after a great deal of bowing, we all fell into our places again.

"Won't there be a scolding for this!" whispered Clara. "We shall both have impositions."

"I don't care," I said, recklessly. "I should not mind if I slipped again."

"Slipped!" said Clara, satirically; "that was a pretty slip, certainly. I never saw so clumsy a slip, but it answered capitally."

"What do you mean?" I said, innocently.

"Oh, of course, you don't know, dear," said Clara, growing more and more satirical. "But there, never mind, I have both the notes."

"What notes?" I ejaculated, with my heart beginning to beat—oh, so fast!

"Now, don't be a little stupid," said Clara, "when you know all the time. The Signor dropped them into my parasol, as I held it down half shut, and there they are—for I have not dared to take them out yet."

And there, sure enough, were two tiny brown paper packets, looking for all the world like packets of garden seeds, so as not to catch any one's eye when they were delivered—tied up, too, with little bits of string, so as not to be in the least like what they really were. Though, really, it was too bad to try and make out that the whole



That
unfeeling
Clara

It was more than a
Dream!

It Ann but knew!

a connected
exercise

Oh! Achille

ANGUISH IN PRINT.

Digitized by Google

thing was planned, and that I had slipped on purpose. Now, was it not?

"Why, what dear, loveable ingenuity," I could not help exclaiming; "And is one for you then, dear?"

"And why not, pray?" exclaimed Clara; "why should not I have notes as well as somebody, who has her meetings as well?"

"I'm sure I don't," I exclaimed. "How can you say so? Why, you know I did not meet him."

"Not your fault, my dear," said Clara, satirically. "But there, I'm not finding fault; but when I am so open and confidential, I'm sure you need not be so close."

"Now, did you not promise to forget all that?" I said.

"Well, yes, so I did," she replied; "and I won't say any more about it. But this was clever, wasn't it; and I'm sure I give you every credit for managing that slip so well."

"Indeed—indeed—indeed—indeed!" I said, "it was an accident."

But it was no use whatever; and the more I protested, the more the tiresome thing would not believe me; till I grew so cross, I could have pinched her, only that I could not afford to quarrel just then.

By means of changing parasols, I obtained possession of my note; and then, how long the time did seem before we received our orders to turn back! But I learnt, though, from Clara that Achille had made quite a confidante of the Signor, and that they were both planning together for us to have a long meeting.

"But how do you get to know all this?" I said.

"Do you suppose, miss, that no one else but you can manage to pass and receive notes so cleverly?" she replied.

And I could not make any answer, for somehow or another Clara generally managed to get the better of me.

What would I not have given to have been alone for one five minutes beneath one of the shady trees, for it seemed ages since I had had a letter from Achille. But it was of no use to wish; and I'm sure that it was quite three-quarters of an hour before Clara and I were up in our bed-room together, trying to get rid of Patty Smith.

She was such a stupid girl, and the more you gave her hints to go the more she would persist in stopping, for she was as obstinate as she was stupid; and I'm sure, if that's

true about the metempsychosis, Patty Smith, in time to come, will turn into a lady donkey, like those grey ones that are led round Chester-square of a morning, and are owned by one of the purveyors of asses' milk. We tried all we could to get rid of her, but it was of no use; and at last, when we were ready to cry with vexation, and about to give it up and go down to dinner without reading our notes, some one called out—

"A letter for Miss Smith."

And then away ran the tiresome thing, and we were quite alone.

JACK AND HIS GREEN.

"LOR' bless yer, sir, that's reglar swept away. If you see a Jack-in-the-Green on the fust, he's only a ghost of what used to be."

"Why, when I was a young man, Jack-in-the-Green was in his prime. That was in the days when here in London, out in the streets in the morning, you could hear the rattle of the sweep's brush on the chimbley pots, and the boy's cheery 'Hillo! hallo! hallo!' And there if you looked up you could see his head an' arms out o' the pot, and him a-waving his black cap about. Ah! them was times, them was. Talk about cruelty to boys—sending 'em up the chimbleys! Why, bless you, they liked it, 'cept when they got stuck, which wasn't often. Why, I had one boy, when I was first in business, as it didn't matter how crooked the chimbley was, he couldn't get stuck in it nohow. He was all gristle that there boy was, and he'd wriggle hisself up and down just like a heel. Ah! it was a pity as he died—but he did. P'raps though it was just as well, for it would ha' broke his heart to see hisself sooperseeded by a long fishing rod made o' malaccy cane and a brush as can't sweep into the corners nohow, not being in its natur."

"But you was asking about May Day and Jack-in-the-Green. Ah! there used to be some doings then. Why, we used to be a-preparing and a-saving up for that for months. I don't want to brag, but you ast any one if I wasn't the best Jack-in-the-Green in London. You see I used to give my mind to it, and take pride in it all, and take care as my Green was better than anybody else's Green."

"How did I make it? Why, out of

clothes-props and hoops. Bottom hoops used to be off a big sugar tub, and the top ones off a barrel; and the top one of iron, so as to be nice and strong. Four props I used to have—thin ones—and the hoops was tied with a good string; and these big at the bottom, little at the top, so as you made a thing like a hollow sugar-loaf, ten foot high, and plenty o' room for a chap inside to carry it like a Punch and Judy show. Then there used to come the fitting-in of strings, and laths, and more hoops of wire, which we covered with green boughs and leaves of laurel and ivy, except one little square hole for the man who carried it to peep out of; while, wherever we could, we stuck all over ribbons and paper flowers, and every bit o' bright stuff we could get hold of—specially up atop, which used to be all colours, like a crown with streamers. Ah! I have seen some handsome Greens in my day—splendid! and a pretty weight they'd be too. I allers had my Greens made heavy after the accident as happened to 'Arry Jackson, who got blowed right over one windy May Day, just as he was turning a corner, and the boys a hooraying, and looking up inside at his legs, as he lay there on the ground kicking, and trying to back out.

"Why, we used to go round to the houses where we swept chimbleys, and beg for things to dekyrate the Green, and them as was going to dance. Some wouldn't give us anything; but, bless you, some folks would come out handsome, and give us ribbons, and pink muslin, and green veils—lots o' things; and a fine time it was getting ready. It used to be generally the master sweep's daughter as was Queen; and all good sweeps kep' a brass ladle on purpose for her to go round with to collect the money.

"Our party that I used to go with was seven; there was 'Arry in the Green—Jack, you know—and the Queen, and a chap as played the pipes and drum. Ah! and he could play 'em too—lovely. You don't often hear anything like 'em now. Then there was me and three boys, all dressed up in our ribbons, and with a brush and a wooden sut shovel each to rattle as we danced round and round the Green. Why, we used to practise for a week afore we went out; and even then we wasn't perfect, for 'Arry would go wrong ways, and that made me take to it. You know the pipes

and drums ought to be on the pavement; then the Jack-in-the-Green in the middle of the road, and us dancing round it. Well, I used to say as the Green ought to go round one way, and we the other; but 'Arry would be that obstinate that he kep' on turning the same way as we turned ourselves, and spoiled half the effect. 'Scuse me being husky, that's the sut as gets into one's throat. That was a day, that was, when 'Arry got blowed over. It was a cold, wet time; and the Green, which was quite ten foot high, was all dripping wet, and the paper and coloured ribbons sticking to the green leaves, or being cut right off by the wind. The drum was so wet as the sounds came out of it all muffled and soft, and when our chap blowed the pipes, you could hear the rain guggling in 'em. As for us, our Queen, who'd got a wreath of red roses round her head, and a pink muslin all over gold and silver paper, you might ha' took her and wrung her, she was so wet; and the boys as had their faces painted beautiful—like as I'd seen it done at Camberwell Fair—they would keep rubbing their faces when the rain run down and tickled 'em, and o' course they got smudged awful.

"Well, we was awful out of temper, and when 'Arry was blowed over he says, says he—it was about twelve o'clock—'Let's give it up,' he says, 'and go back; I'm sick on it.' But 'No,' I says, 'never say die, old man.' 'How much is there to divide?' he says; and I counted up and I told him—'One and nine!' Then he groaned, for it warn't much to divide among seven. 'Come on,' I says, 'let's have another try;' and 'Arry got inside once more, the drum and me lifting the Green over him; and just then it came on to blow and rain wus than ever, and the Queen shivered as bad as the boys. 'Never mind,' I says, 'let go, 'Arry.' So the pipes tooned up, and the drum thumped, and I rattled my sut shovel, and begun to run round the green, and the boys did the same; and Sally Smith went to the windows with the ladle; and I suppose the people were sorry for us, for the coppers, oh! and the silver too, began to come out in style. That warmed us, of course, and at it we went again in the pouring wet till quite dark, and the consequence was when I emptied the bag out on the drum that night, we'd got in sixpences, and fourpennies, and coppers, three pound eight and elevenpence! But there, them days

are gone by now; Jack-in-the-Green's about dead, along o' lots more good old customs. Sweeps aint sweeps now, like honest men; they're Ramoneurs by appyntment to some swell or another, and there's more chimbleys catches fire now through sut left in the corners than there used to be when boys used to get up with a black cap pulled down over their face. I'm an old 'un now, but I recklects it all well, and nothing cheers my old 'art like hearing the rattle of a brush upon a wooden sun shovel, like that as you see hanging there by the wall."

ONLY A YEAR.

CHAPTER X.

"LIAR!"

THE morrow came, and in the afternoon Thyrlle, with the books, presented himself at the Manor House. He did not see Mrs. Kyriel or the young men, but the two girls were in—Kittie busy with a fernery she had in the conservatory, to which he promised to add some rare specimens he had at Merresford. Phillis was so "cautious," that he went away with the impression that she was silent either from being out of humour, or bored by his presence; and he could not but be charmed by the unassuming but earnest endeavours of Kittie to please and entertain him when she found that some freak of her sister's left her to do all.

The next day the party from the Manor House encountered Thyrlle at the meet; and, in the excitement of the hunt, Phillis quite forgot her reserve, and was as charming to him as she alone, when she chose, could be. It was on this occasion that Thyrlle had an encounter with Grainger, which, as all the former ones had done, raised him still higher in Miss Kyriel's estimation. It was very difficult for any man, however wise or strong-minded, to resist Phillis when she chose to put forth her powers; and Mr. Thyrlle was not above taking to himself the subtle, delicious flattery of the fact that she was trying to charm him, and him only. Did she not dismiss Lord Ashley peremptorily, saying to Thyrlle, as his lordship rode off discomfited, that he was an insufferable bore? Was she not downright rude to Mr. Brooke? And did she not send Captain the Honourable Algernon Awkerly to the verge of despair by laughing saucily at him, and saying he

might break his neck on her account if he chose; adding, "Give me a lead, Mr. Thyrlle, over the fence—the stiff one with the posts!" And Dickie having followed Mr. Thyrlle's chestnut mare with great ardour, the Honourable Algernon, not feeling equal to the stiff fence with the posts, pulled his moustaches and looked somewhat foolish, as his eyes pursued the diminishing Dickie, accompanied by the chestnut mare.

And it was pleasant—more than that, dangerous—when Hasson Grainger joined the hunt, to meet Phillis Kyriel's eyes, very soft and entreating, and to hear her say—

"You are not going to leave me, are you? You won't go away because of him to-day?"

Thyrlle was not at all stoical, as has been before remarked, and he complied readily; merely contenting himself by utterly declining to see Grainger.

But that gentleman was very far from satisfied with the state of things which he found.

"Phil is only drawing him out, of course," he said to himself, by way of consolation; "but I wish to Heaven he would break his neck. Not much chance of that, though; he is the very deuce to ride—always was. But we are coming to Heldon Quarries; and I know a place there—He never can keep his temper; and it will be no harm, if he will be fool enough, to get him to take a regular good crasher."

With this truly amiable intent, he rode up to Phillis's left side, Thyrlle being on her right, held out his hand, and said—

"How are you to-day, Phil? Not much chance of a run, I'm afraid."

Phillis touched his hand with the tips of her little dogskin gloves, and remarked—

"Indeed!"

Thyrlle kept his place by her, but looked straight to his front.

"We are coming to the Heldon Quarries," pursued Hasson, in no way appearing disconcerted by his cool reception. "You know the place, don't you?"

"Yes."

"Capital place for a little jumping. I know a particular jump that I used often to take on old Oswald—you remember him? But I don't suppose that either I or anybody here now could manage it."

"Really."

Phillis was as laconic as possible, and Thyrlle neither spoke nor looked round.

"Well, you see, the bank has rather given

way since that time; and a fall into Heldon Quarries, with a horse on the top of one, would be awkward."

"Very."

"Deuce take you!" thought Grainger, impatiently; "but, thank the Lord, here's Ashley."

"Don't go that way, Miss Kyriell!" said Lord Ashley. "We must go round the quarries—the low road."

"Miss Kyriell wants to see a feat performed at the high end of the quarry, Ashley. Mr. Thyrlé is going to take a leap across it for her entertainment, as she finds it dull without any foxes."

"Mr. Thyrlé is going to do no such thing, Hasson," said Phillis, forgetting her dignity as she thought of the proposed leap.

"What is it you are humbugging about?" drawled Lord Ashley.

"Mr. Thyrlé is accustomed to hunt in Cumberland," continued Grainger, indescribable insolence in his look and tone. "Very different style of country to this. He is accustomed to clear the mouths of coal pits and iron mines as easy as look at them, and—surely, his father was M.F.H., or first whip—or—*what* was he, Thyrlé?—I forget."

Thyrlé had not lost his temper, though his colour altered a little. He spoke coolly—

"What my father was is perfectly well known, not only to you, but also to Miss Kyriell and Lord Ashley. As you have forgotten it, I presume you have also lost the remembrance of having been his guest."

"You are going quite away from the point," said Grainger, stroking his silky chestnut moustache, and feeling much pleased at having provoked Thyrlé to speak to him. "What I say is, that though you may choose to laugh at what you call our easy country, yet I will bet you twenty to one that you don't even try the place I will show you."

"To be placed among the rest of your debts to me?" said Thyrlé, in a stern undertone, and a blaze coming into his eyes.

"Don't be so foolish as to go, Mr. Thyrlé," implored Phillis, as he turned his horse to follow Grainger.

"I thought he would scarcely care to see it," sneered the latter, as Thyrlé very naturally paused at the sound and the sight of the sweet voice and face that besought him.

Some other stragglers from the hunt came

up, and Thyrlé followed Grainger in silence, the others joining in to see what was coming off.

It was a wild-looking place they came to: the old quarry below half filled with water, and its bare, red sides standing up stark and ugly. Above, a bleak, wintry afternoon sky, with driving grey clouds; and ploughed fields and bare pasture land around.

The sides of the quarry came to a narrow gap about the middle—a gap of some eleven or twelve feet, with a sheer drop of twenty or thirty feet on to the red rocks below; a few stunted furze bushes grew at this side, but on the other side was a bare shelving bank.

Lord Ashley exclaimed, with a cry of dismay, when he saw Thyrlé contemplating this—

"The banks are rotten—for God's sake, don't think of it!"

"Don't be afraid, Lord Ashley," sneered Grainger; "*he is.*"

"Will you follow me?" demanded Thyrlé, looking at Grainger.

"My dear fellow, I'm not mounted like you—it makes all the difference."

Phillis dared not trust her voice, though she longed to speak, for fear of betraying herself; for she trembled with fear. If he should leap and fail!—if, good God! he should be brought out of that horrible pit mangled, dead!—the beautiful, lithe form. She sickened with terror. A few more entreaties from the men beside him, outweighed by two or three skilfully worded taunts from Grainger, and Phillis saw Thyrlé back the mare, while the others drew away from him.

"Don't, don't, Mr. Thyrlé!" she exclaimed, her voice half stifled.

He looked round at her, and laughed the same pleasant laugh she had first heard on the snowy night on Reston Moor. The next minute the mare was pawing the air, almost on the verge of the precipice.

"She refuses it, Mr. Thyrlé!" exclaimed Captain Harper, an officer from Knollingham.

"She can't do it," joined in Lord Ashley. "It's manslaughter, by George, to let him try it."

"The beast is as wise as her master," added Grainger. "We are all aware how well Mr. Thyrlé can manage a horse."

And if Thyrlé's face paled, it was from rage—not fear—as he again reined back the mare, and forced her at the leap.

He dashed in the spurs, and the poor beast sprang, terrified, over the yawning chasm. The rotten bank yielded as she touched it; and in less time than it takes to read, the reckless rider had flung himself from her back, gained a firmer standing-place, and with hand and voice encouraged the struggling, panting animal to the higher ground he stood on.

Quivering in every nerve, she scrambled up the treacherous bank and was safe; and a cheer from the other side sent a warm glow of triumph over Thyrlé's face; while Hasson Grainger, provoked with his own stratagem, said he "thought Thyrlé could do it if he liked;" and rode away with an unpleasant conviction that the affair was a decided coup manqué for him, and that others but himself knew he thought so.

The next day Mr. Thyrlé came to the Manor House in his dogcart, with a lot of rare ferns for Kittie; and Phillis was seized with a fit of unreasonable jealousy on seeing that he paid the chief of his attentions to her young sister. So she left them discussing the plants, and did not even return to bid him good-bye. Gilfred and Brooke were there, and Thyrlé went with them to inspect the horses, and to see Juno's puppies.

What would he have thought, could he have known that the eyes of the indifferent, haughty Phillis were earnestly watching from the gallery window—that they never wearied or wavered until they saw him slowly drive up the Cross-roads Hill?

The following day—Sunday—they all met at church in Hallingford, and Thyrlé was asked to come after evening service and see Mrs. Kyriel, who wished to thank him for the books.

The next day he brought Mrs. Kyriel some beautiful coloured photographs of Venice. Thus, in some way, scarcely a day passed, in spite of the ten miles which lay between, that Thyrlé did not encounter the occupants of the Manor House.

And never did he find Phillis in the same mood two days running. She was capricious, she was ridiculous, he said to himself; there was no knowing how to please her; and he spent much more time than he ever imagined in wondering about her, and about the light in which she regarded him. In fact, could any competent judge have decided on the amount of his thoughts which

were occupied by the beauty, the thinker would have been extremely indignant. He had heard of her on all sides—how Lord Ashley still had hopes of winning her; of the host of her worshippers; and how one after another of those bold enough to run the risk received their dismissal.

"I couldn't stand such a woman," Thyrlé said to himself continually. "That gentle little Kittie is worth twenty of her, and would make twenty times as good a wife."

Then he would place the chair by his fireside where Phillis had once sat with him, and try to bring before him the witching face, changeful—"mystic, wonderful." He never guessed how much of her fascination lay in her varying moods, even as the peculiarity and chief charm of her beauty was in the change of her expression. He felt so secure in his own mind that he should not fall a victim to the lovely coquette, and the pleasant intimacy to which the Kyriels readily admitted him was so delightful after the dull or ill-tempered society of Miss Mason, that he had no hesitation in often availing himself of it. And as Phillis had foreseen, the world, with its usual good nature, found out at once that Miss Kyriel was going to fool the new proprietor of Merresford—unless, indeed, she should think him a big enough man to suit her. Lord Ashley, the most constant of all the fickle beauty's admirers, took an early opportunity to show Mr. Thyrlé in a quiet way that he was no friend to him. Lord Ashley was the eldest son of the Earl of Knollinghamshire; and although the Earl was poor, and his estates much embarrassed, yet his lordship was not altogether a *parti* to be sneered at. He was a good-looking young man, with long, fair whiskers and moustache, a dawdling manner, and certainly not much to say for himself.

Phillis laughed at him, made fun of him to his face, told him he would bore her to death in a week, and utterly declined the honour of his hand; yet, with a perseverance oftenest to be found in calm, obtuse natures, he never seriously entertained an idea of relinquishing his hopes.

"She will think better of it some day," he consoled himself by often saying to his favourite sister, Lady Alice; but now he was aroused so far as to feel a torpid sort of animosity against Mr. Thyrlé. Not that his lordship displayed the faintest insolence of tone or word to Thyrlé, who had more

than once been his father's guest; but by an indefinable something the young man made it perfectly apparent to the other man that he disliked him.

These days to Kittie Kyriel were all among her happiest. Brooke had found that tête-à-tête drive to Forley pleasant enough to offer several times afterwards to be Miss Kittie's charioteer. Perhaps, like Thyrlé, he said to himself that the constant and joyous good-humour of the younger Miss Kyriel would be a better thing to pass life with than the unreliable temper of Phillis. Mr. Brooke began to take an interest in ferns, and was frequently to be seen carrying watering-pots or baskets of mould to the conservatory, for the benefit of Kittie and the plants.

Phillis, all this time, was restless, dissatisfied with herself, subject to long intervals of gloomy, silent thought, and feverish fits of gaiety. Every day she spent—unobserved—many a long hour at the gallery window, with the hope in her heart, oftenest fulfilled, of seeing a well-known figure on horseback come down the Cross-roads Hill, in the slanting sunlight.

And there was no one in the house who was not glad to see Thyrlé. Gilfred liked him extremely; Kittie ranked him among her acquaintances second only to Mr. Brooke; and Mrs. Kyriel's sweet, sad face lighted up with unwonted pleasure when he came. Even Juno knew him, and greeted him with friendly eyes and a polite wag.

Hasson Grainger took especial care to avoid meeting him again; he came now rarely to the Manor House, and generally timed his visits early.

The young officer's leave of absence was up on the 15th of March, and the ball at Hensley was to be on the evening before.

It was on the 12th of March that Thyrlé went to Nottingham, to see a man upon his northern mining affairs. He went by train, and saw the man, whom he wished to take the place of steward on his Cumberland property. This man—Hutchins by name—having been approved of by Thyrlé, received from him certain letters and papers to take to his new master's man of business in London, where he was to get his final instructions.

Having some time to wait for his train after this transaction, Thyrlé entered an hotel, and went into a sort of news-room,

where also was a billiard table and a few young men playing pool.

Thyrlé took up a paper, and seated himself in one of the deep, old-fashioned windows. Tired presently of reading, he was looking out on the dull, old street, when the sound of a voice near startled him.

"He is a *beast*," said Hasson Grainger, with emphasis, "and a low-born snob into the bargain."

Thyrlé had heard no name spoken, but his ears began to tingle after the approved fashion of ears when their owner is having unflattering things said of him.

"By Jove," answered the slow, drawling voice of Lord Ashley, "how you do hate that fellow, Grainger! I never knew you let an opportunity pass for giving him a bad word."

"Nor would you," replied Grainger, rather surlily, "if you had had the same cause for it that I have."

"Aw—really? It's my stroke." And Lord Ashley played, and having made a bad stroke, returned to Grainger's side a little ruffled. "I can't tell why the dooce," he remarked, resuming the thread of his discourse, "you need make all this mystery. Why don't you have it out with the fellow? I wouldn't stand impudence from a cad for an hour. Give him a thrashing—duels are out of date now."

"I did once give him a thrashing," said Hasson Grainger, his voice unsteady, and his lips quivering.

Neither he nor the other men in the room, who were attracted by the tone of passion in which he spoke, noticed that Thyrlé had risen, and was standing before the window, his arms folded, his dark face darker than ever, his hard mouth wearing a strange, cruel expression.

"I'm sure I don't care who knows about it," continued Hasson Grainger, trying to speak carelessly; "the whole story is, that I cut out this Thyrlé about a girl he was in love with—not such a hard thing to do"—and he laughed; "after which he chose to be cheeky to me, and I gave him a licking which he will bear the marks of to this day."

"LIAR!" exclaimed Thyrlé, grasping Hasson's shoulder with a grip like iron, and looking sternly at the eyes which avoided his, and the face which paled and turned away. All the men ceased their game, and stood silently watching. Hasson, after a

moment's deliberation, turned fiercely on Thyrlé, and strove to free himself.

"Give us room!—don't interfere!" cried Thyrlé. "Lord Ashley, you will see fair play?"

Grainger's hand gripped his enemy's throat, and for three or four minutes there was a struggle as if for dear life between the two men. They clasped each other close; there was no scientific blow exchanged; there was a quick writhing of active limbs which the lookers-on—who had, perhaps, never seen a good specimen of Cumberland wrestling before—could scarce comprehend.

Then came a sudden, heavy fall.

Grainger crashed backwards, his head striking the floor; and Thyrlé stood erect, lithe, and steady, though his breath came fast.

Ashley and one or two others brought Grainger round after a short delay; for he was stunned and senseless for a few minutes. But, recovering himself, he glared up angrily at his adversary.

"You had better kick me—now I am down; it's a sort of thing you would enjoy."

"I have merely to say again, liar!" returned Thyrlé.

Grainger staggered dizzily to his feet.

"What do you mean, you low-born hound, by speaking in this way to a gentleman?" he exclaimed, infuriated.

Thyrlé's temper gave way a little at this.

"I heard your own words," he replied.

"You are not a gentleman, but a lying coward; and you don't leave this room till you retract what you have said."

Grainger saw his advantage, and answered, coolly—

"It is no good trying to bully a fellow you have just knocked down, as it won't bring you any applause. I shall go out of the room when I like, and retract nothing."

A slight murmur of approval greeted this declaration. Thyrlé paused, but in vain—his passion had got the better of him, and his eyes seemed to flash as he spoke again—

"Do you dare to tell me that *you* ever fought me, and beat me? That you—"

His scorn, or his memory, seemed to choke his voice; and Grainger, braving it out, took up his words—reassured by the feeling that he had the goodwill of the audience.

"I mean to say that I flogged you with a dog-whip till you could not stand. I mean

to say that you shirked a meeting in the Bois de Boulogne; and that all this hubbub was about a silly girl—pretty, I allow—who took a fancy for me before she had given you a ceremonious dismissal. You seem to hold me answerable for what Alice—"

"Silence!" exclaimed Thyrlé, white to the lips with uncontrollable anger, and his eyes again emitting that strange, dangerous light. "Dare to name her again, and I will not answer that it shall not be the last word your cursed lips shall ever utter."

Thyrlé, striving hard to regain his coolness, turned to the spectators of this curious scene; while Grainger laughed contemptuously.

"Lord Ashley—and all of you—what will you consider a convincing proof that my assertions are true, and Mr. Grainger's false?"

"Well," said his lordship, "I really don't know. This is an awkward affair altogether, Mr. Thyrlé; and, as you've had the satisfaction of throwing Mr. Grainger down, if he is willing to pass over the very objectionable terms you have applied to him—which of course you must retract—and to let the matter stand, perhaps it would be as well—"

"I will *not* let the matter stand, Lord Ashley!" exclaimed Thyrlé, passionately. "Retract what I have said! Why should he be believed before me? My God, have I not let him go again and again? Is he to wrong me for ever, and am I to forgive him? He or I must give in to-day."

There was a minute's silence; then Lord Ashley said to him—

"What is *your* version of the story Mr. Grainger has given us?"

"I assert that Mr. Grainger did not win the love of the woman he dares to say he did, although he tried to. I need not mention other injuries he has endeavoured to do to me; and I assert that *I* flogged *him* with a dog-whip on the tenth of August, nearly six years ago; that *he* evaded a meeting with me in the Bois de Boulogne; and that he never so much as gave me one open blow in his life."

"And how are you to prove all this, sir?" inquired Lord Ashley, coldly.

"How does he prove *his* words?" was Thyrlé's indignant answer.

"I think it is scarcely worth more altercation, Lord Ashley," interposed Grainger, who was beginning to tremble at the

serious aspect things were taking. "The next time Mr. Thyrlé uses the strong language he has to-day, he had better provide himself with the means of proving it; but he loses his temper so easily that he quite forgets himself."

"You don't go yet, Hasson Grainger," said Thyrlé, his hand again on the other's shoulder—a thought occasioned by some of the first words of Grainger having brought a new idea to his mind. "You said, I think, that the man who got that same thrashing on that tenth of August, long ago, would probably bear the marks of it to this day; and I believe you. Lord Ashley, will this be convincing?—that the man on whose shoulders there are no scars shall have spoken the truth, and that he who bears them is a liar?"

Lord Ashley, and all the assembly, consented to this test; and Thyrlé, with fingers trembling with eagerness, threw aside his coat and waistcoat, and dragged off his collar and shirt. Not a mark, not the sign or possibility of a scar was to be found by the scrutineers; and Grainger, finding further defence impossible, went to the door.

Lord Ashley stopped him.

"Grainger," he said, rather quicker, and with more energy than was his wont, "don't you see you must do this too? Don't you see Mr. Thyrlé has made good his assertion, and, if you have any wish to associate still with gentlemen, you must do the same."

"Lord Ashley," said Hasson Grainger, very pale and painfully agitated, "this is childish. Is my word not to be relied on? It is an insult to me to demand a proof of my veracity."

Lord Ashley was prejudiced in favour of Grainger; but he was, nevertheless, a just and true gentleman, and he replied rather sternly—

"The insult, as you call it, has been much harder pressed upon Mr. Thyrlé than upon you. Nothing is required of you but to give the same proof he has."

Grainger attempted no reply to this. He stifled a curse between his clenched teeth, and then remarked that it was getting late, and he must be off to catch his train.

Again he was leaving the room, when the startlingly emphatic tones of Lord Ashley made him pause, and at the same time concentrated the attention of the whole room. It is a pleasant thing to hear a

modern young "swell," whose flow of language seldom exceeds, say, ten words a minute, and who has trouble about his r's and his s's, suddenly find a method to speak with the decision and efficiency of a drill-sergeant or a Prime Minister.

"Mr. Grainger—if you choose to leave this matter in this unsatisfactory state as regards yourself, you must not be surprised if I fail to recognize for the future a man who I shall consider thoroughly deserves the epithet which Mr. Thyrlé used to you—'liar.'"

Grainger said nothing, but shot a glance of fiery hate at Thyrlé. He passed on; and the other men, some of whom he had known from boyhood, stood coldly aloof; and, amid the dead silence which followed Lord Ashley's speech, Hasson Grainger went away.

Then, with a frank, honest manliness, which won Thyrlé's esteem for ever after, Lord Ashley turned to him, and offered his hand, expressing his regret that he had been led so far by his prejudice as to doubt, as he had, the word of a gentleman.

Thyrlé merely answered that it was very natural he should stand by his friend. And then the others—young country squires, and two or three officers—came up to Ashley, to be introduced by him to Thyrlé; which was accordingly done. Soon after this the latter left the room, and was in good time for his train. At the station he made inquiries, and heard that Mr. Grainger had left about ten minutes before, by the up train to London.

As Thyrlé went home, though he could not reproach himself for what he had done in self-defence, yet he did think with a strange sense of regret of the shattered fortunes of Hasson Grainger. He was young—not yet thirty—with a fair prospect when he started in life: a good name, no lack of money, a father indulgent to a fault, and a mother who had idolized him, and who had broken her heart when she found her god was but common clay. Was this to be his end? He had squandered more money than he would ever earn, did he live a hundred years; he had forgotten that truth and honour are held high in almost all circles; and he had fallen—

"God knows how low," muttered Thyrlé. "He must be poor, and he can never resume the position he has lost to-day."

And Thyrlé went on thinking all the way

home, and during long hours of darkness. He thought of the bright-haired, blue-eyed, beautiful boy, who had been his friend; of his pride when he brought him to stay at his father's old house in Cumberland; of the boundless affection and admiration he had then felt for him; and the end of it all. The end had been a fair girl dying, and whispering to Thyrl—

"Forgive him with your whole heart, Archer; forgive him, as you hope to be forgiven."

And though Thyrl could justify to himself the whole proceedings of the day, his heart was not at ease; and notwithstanding that he felt sure that his bitter foe was cleared from his path for ever.

TABLE TALK.

THIS from the strike district: To-day I have been again investigating the causes that have brought about the present lamentable strike in this district. There can be no question that the great majority of the agricultural labourers, at least in this part of Suffolk, will be none the worse for a "shaking-up" out of the deplorable condition of apathy and purblind content in which they have too long existed. Those who live at a distance, and have no opportunities of learning what is the real state of affairs, will scarcely believe, for instance, that even the most tyrannical of farmers would insist on his man living in a cottage with a leaky thatch, and with walls reeking from mildew; or that the most earnest beseeching of the labourer could not move the obdurate employer from his cruel determination that the babes of his ploughman or horse-tender should lie on a floor, the boards of which are wet and rotten, and falling to pieces into the mire beneath. It is almost as incredible as that any man, with care for his family, and no more than even a minimum share of mother wit, is not equal to the task of stopping a leak in a thatch, or mixing and applying a pail of lime-wash to a plaster wall, or mending, by means of the almost worthless planking of an old barn, the damp-eaten floor on which his children repose. It is only because they are so completely reliant on the "master" for everything that matters have so long remained in this condition. I put the matter to a six-foot Exning baby, whose wife had shown me the deplorable condition

of her cottage. "It's been like it for years," said she, alluding to certain holes in the floor, through which a dog might have pursued a rat. "He's asked the master forty times to have it seen to, but it's like talking to a horse-post." "I think," said I, addressing the male head of the house, "that if it was my floor, I should have made some sort of a job of it myself before this." "Aint got no wood," said he, shaking his head. "Why, there's a piece," said I, pointing to a handy bit in a corner; "that, and a hammer, and a few nails, now!" "Aint got ne'er a hammer, nor yet no nails," replied the cottager; "besides, I aint had no time." "But you've got time now." "Now! What, set about mending a house that I may be turned out of in a month!—'taint likely. Besides, it aint my business at all."

THE *Echo* says: "Bishop Hedley (Roman Catholic), while preaching in Monmouth, described the press as 'the most powerful engine in the whole armoury of the devil.' He cautioned his hearers how they read paragraphs in the papers having reference to their church, to the Pope, or to the bishops, as, without exception, paragraphs of this nature vilified the Catholic faith; and he believed the writers of these paragraphs would, in the interests of their readers, have even attended the Crucifixion. The press, he held, greatly contributed to the immorality and darkness of this world." Poor man! And this is the nineteenth century.

MUCH HAS BEEN said of late about what is technically known as "stage carpentry"—i.e., the showy get-up of a piece, as compared with its dramatic treatment. The latest phase of stage carpentry, if it may be so termed, is at the Prince of Wales's theatre, where, in the "School for Scandal," the furniture and decorations are real and expensive to a degree. Old bric-à-brac runs riot over the stage; and as to the gorgeous dresses and ornaments, Lady Sneerwell is said to wear four hundred pounds' worth of choice lace, and Lady Teazle as many thousand pounds' worth of brilliants. For the fact that they are diamonds we can vouch.

Terms of Subscription to ONCE A WEEK, free by post:—Weekly Numbers for Six Months, 5s. 5d.; Monthly Parts, 5s. 8d.

ONCE A WEEK

NEW SERIES.

No. 333.

May 16, 1874.

Price 2d.

JACK'S SISTER; OR, WOMANLY PAST QUESTION.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

BABY MOVES THE KING'S PAWN.



WHETHER any human being had ever looked more miserable than the gay and light-hearted Clifton Gore, as he closed the hospitable gate of the Cedars behind him, and went his way towards the railway station. Poor fellow! some men have laid their nearest relations in the grave, and gone away looking forward hopefully to the great awakening; but he had buried the nearest and dearest part of himself—his love and his faith—in a grave so deep, that, as he told himself again and again, there could be no more awakening for either—never any more.

His idol had fallen, and with her fell all his reverence for the womanhood she adorned. Let me tell you that this was no trifle for a man to lose on a summer's day—a man, too, who had never known cross or care in all his life, and whose one stumbling-block had been too great a weakness for the women who had, one and all, conspired to spoil and flatter him from the moment of his birth. He had withstood this weakness. Of all the women he admired, and who admired him, he had chosen one, not for her beauty, which was small, nor even for her sweet voice and gentle manner (who ever gave *him* a rough word or look?), but

rather for the soul within, which, as he imagined, gave the tone to these physical charms. To him she appeared something infinitely better, higher, and nobler than the rest of human beings—a woman so immeasurably purer and grander, in her grave simplicity, than all other women, that he felt irresistibly impelled to worship at her shrine, even while dreading to speak his devotion aloud, lest his saint should repel him as unworthy.

This was an exaggeration, of course: Enid, as I have often said, being in no wise better than scores of other pure-minded and well-bred English women; perhaps a trifle more unselfish than most, and certainly less brilliant and talented than many—a commonplace, good woman, trying to do her duty to the best of her knowledge, and probably making many mistakes in so doing; but in so far a most sweet and loveable nature, and worthy of any man's love and respect. Unfortunately, you see, Clifton was not content with this matter-of-fact view of his divinity. He must idealize; and, like most idealists, he no sooner saw one peg in his fairy castle give way than the whole building seemed worthless, and even the solid foundations shared in the general ruin. Yet what was the flaw which had shaken his faith in this pet vision?

I will tell you. She was in love with Merle—with Merle Kinnardson!

Some men—those predatory animals, par exemple, whose affection lives only in the chase—might have seen in this merely an additional reason for Clifton to love her. It was not so with him, however. Yet neither was his opposite conduct to be deduced from that pure morality which would cease, on religious grounds, to worship another man's property, or break, even in spirit, the tenth commandment of the law.

However much Clif's admirers might be given to exalting that young man, I, his biographer, beg leave to announce him as little

of a saint as he was a fiend. (Yes, Miss Enid, I am going to take you down, and not spare your hero, though I dare say you would like it.) Tried by the ordinary standard of male morality, he was, and knew himself to be, an exceptionally good and well-conducted young fellow—a character which was owing as much to a certain instinct of pride, and a gentlemanly repugnance to anything verging on blackguardism, as to early training, or religious principle.

But pride, which constrains you to be higher than other men, in order that you may stand higher and be more highly appreciated, may, if not appreciated at all, be thwarted to evil; and youthful arrogance, however productive of laudable ambition, is exceedingly susceptible to small mortifications. Clif was naturally aware, both from his looking glass and his friends' flatteries, that he was better looking, better mannered, and better behaved than nine men out of ten. He did not dwell on the fact, or give himself airs accordingly, because it came naturally to him; and the world had been far too unanimous in heaping laurels on its darling for the darling to be troubled with flaunting them for himself; but rather pleased himself with finding out the merits of others, and adapting his own brilliancy to their varied lights. This, however, was quite a different thing to having his own light extinguished, and his sovereignty scorned by the very being for whose goodwill he had doffed his plumes most humbly; and for an individual whom he would never have thought worthy of being counted on the list of his friends or rivals. You may humble yourself, even like to do it, on certain occasions; but, by George, I defy you to show me a man who likes being humbled by another.

He had known "little Kinnardson," as he called him, all his life; had never seen an inch beyond the outside of that life; and, while always treating him with the easy cordiality he extended to most people, had rather disliked his old junior in the school-house than otherwise; looked on him as a "poor creature" without pluck or nerve, an appendage to the Leyburns, who was always being in trouble, and always in the way when not wanted. As to his talents, about which so much fuss was made, a fellow might be bookish, and yet an awful muff. That essay of his, for instance, on "Pre-Raphaelism in Art and Literature." Why, any one could upset half those arguments;

and the rest were palpable pickings from the *Saturday*, réchauffé and modified for present use. He could do as well himself. (I don't think he could, reader; but let that pass.) Besides, if there were any real good in him, he and Jack would have hung together better. Jack wouldn't fight so shy of his cousin without a cause; and that friend of his, Middlemist, had hinted there was one. Certainly, there were women, heaps of them, who didn't mind that sort of thing; but he had thought Enid made of different metal. He fancied that she stood too high, even for himself; and lo! all the while, she had descended to the level of a man whom he had not even cared to admit as a subject of jealousy; and was ready to snub Mr. Gore severely if he ventured to question by a look the suitability of her union with Mr. Kinnardson. "Après ça le deluge!" If he was mistaken in one thing, why not in another? She was capable of loving Merle; ergo, she was capable of coquetting with himself, of leading him on unfairly for the gratification of her vanity, and dismissing him heartlessly when that vanity was gratified. Aye, a woman of any real feeling would rather have bade him a kind farewell than urged him to continue to show himself in her trap after an interview like the last.

What a fool he had been!

He was passing the bank now, and the angry current of his ideas flowed back from Jack's sister to Jack himself. He had not behaved well either; for he must have seen his friend's attraction, even if Clifton had not almost declared it in words, over and over again; and yet had been too indifferent, or too selfish, to give him a word of warning that the ground was occupied. It was not behaving like a friend to be so close in your own affairs, still less to go about blabbing that friend's past follies; and to the very woman he was courting. Well, Jack was a cold sort of fellow generally; but he had thought—

What a fool he had been!

Result of all this, as he climbed the hill to the station: Enid was no angel, after all, but a woman, very like other women, and colder-hearted than most. Jack was neither a Damon nor a Pythias; but just a man, wrapt up in himself, his own affairs, and his own sweethearts; and he—well, he was a very ill-used fellow. Not angry at all! Oh, dear, no! but rather disgusted, and a

wiser man (?) than yesterday. That was all. And there was the London train just in; and, by George! what a pretty girl on the platform.

The pretty girl in question was very young and very slim, dressed in white—some crisp, semi-transparent material, all over frills and little blue bows—and wearing a Watteau sort of hat, also frilled and blue-bowed, and which made a pretence of shading a pair of eyes bluer than the ribbons; and lifted, with an inexpressibly lovely look of childish distress, to the station-master's uncompromising face.

"And you are sure there is no one to meet me?" she asked, in a sweet, infantile treble, which fell pleasantly on Clifton's ear. "You don't know the Cedars, perhaps?—Mr. Leyburn's house. Mr. Leyburn of the bank."

"Knew Muster Leyburn's 'oose!" laughed the old station-master. "P'raps a do. Knew un! Knawed un iver sin 'ee were boorn belike. Noa, mum, a' beent none from there; an' t' floy, floy's engaged by t'other party as was a' gawn to th' Archdeacon's. 'Ee can go in t' omnibus, or 'ee can walk, or 'ee can wait till t' floy comes round, whichsomedever 'ee loikes. 'Taren't moren' ten minutes' walkin'; an' t' floy 'll be round in less nor that'n."

"Oh, I must wait, of course," the young lady said, the corners of her mouth going down a little as her glance wandered to a pile of boxes and portmanteaus on the platform; Clifton the while wondering whether he had ever yet seen such a perfect little face, or such a dimple, like a tiny pink well in the exact centre of the round chin, in the whole course of his life. Almost at the same moment her eyes fell on him, and she started, uttering a faint exclamation, and flushing up with an unmistakable look of recognition, which, together with her evident distress, and a something familiar in her appearance, left him no resource but to come forward, lifting his hat courteously as he inquired whether he could be of any service. She was asking for the Cedars? He had just come from there.

The young lady blushed deeper, the bright, delicate hue of a moss rose, hesitated for one moment, and then, lifting her long curled lashes with a glance of childlike candour, held out her tiny hand.

"You come from the Cedars?" she said. "You must know me, then—I know you;

for I am Baby Delamayne, and you are Clifton Gore, are you not?—Mr. Gore, I mean," correcting herself, with another blush; "but, you see, I have heard your other name oftener from Jack."

What man, be he Diogenes, or a young man of the period in a very wounded state of feelings and temper, could resist this delicious frankness, or be brute enough to go on brooding over his own injuries, when such a caressing little creature was appealing to him in a voice like a silver bell, and with eyes like stars shining through a Neapolitan sky?

"Decidedly, Master Jack is no fool!" was his first thought; and his answer came as cordially as the look of frank admiration which accompanied it.

"Clifton Gore, decidedly, Miss Delamayne; and most delighted to be at your service. How fortunate I should be here, and how kind of you to recognize me! I felt sure that I had seen you somewhere before; though it seems strange," with a second glance of irrepressible admiration, "that I could have forgotten where."

"It would be strange, if you remembered," Baby answered, smilingly. "You met one of my sisters once, at a bachelors' ball at St. Leonard's, two years ago; but I have only seen you on the Marina there, and I dare say you did not notice me. I was quite a child, you know, when you were there with Lady Gore last. More than a year ago, is not it?"

"Not quite a year," said Clifton; "and you must have altered very much if I could have passed without noticing you. I was not, however, guilty of that density, since I recognized your face at once, though I never thought that it belonged to the young lady of whom I have heard so much of late."

"Not half so much as we have heard of you, I am sure," Baby laughed. "I am sure you must think me very bold, Mr. Gore, but you seem quite like an old, old friend—Jack has talked so much of you."

"Treat me like one, then, by letting me assume Jack's duties for the moment, and assist you. And, first, how is it that you are here two hours sooner than your friends expect you? They were coming to meet the 5.15 train."

"Five! Why, I told Jack 3.15 in my letter. How provoking!"

"Rather say how pleasant, to be able to make your friends happy sooner than they

had hoped, and give them a surprise into the bargain. Poor Jack, won't he be angry with me, though, for having forestalled him?"

"He ought to be very much obliged to you," Baby said, laughing in a way which brought out two companion dimples in the soft cheeks to match that one in her chin—"I am, I know; so will you please take care of me, and set me and my belongings in the right way? For indeed"—shaking back the rippling waves of gold from her temples to look up in his face again—"I don't at all know what to do, or where to go, in this strange place."

Clifton was fairly charmed. He could hardly turn his eyes from this new fairy, and vowed to himself that he had never dreamt of anything so pretty and engaging existing—off the stage.

"Her photograph didn't do her a bit of justice. What a lucky dog Jack is, to be sure; and how deucedly sly of him never to talk about her, or give one an idea of what a little angel she was! 'Country parson's daughter,' he said. I never saw any of this species before. Well, I didn't think Jack would have been so close."

And it was with a renewed feeling of resentment against Jack that Clif saw to the stowing away of Miss Delamayne's boxes on a truck, before depositing herself in the now returned fly.

"You are coming, too?" Baby said, as he stepped back, after folding a rug over her knees to keep the dust off. "Oh, do! It will seem so strange, coming sooner than I am expected; and I don't know either of the Miss Leyburns at all. Oh, I made sure that you were coming."

Clifton hesitated, but the mention of "the Miss Leyburns" recalled, with a rush of pain, in what manner he had left the younger lady half an hour ago; and brought a sudden glow to his face, a dark cloud over the smiling eyes, which Baby noticed at once, without being able to explain.

"No, I can't come," he said, speaking with a sort of abrupt hurry, which struck on his own sensitive ear; for he added, apologetically, "I'm very sorry, but, you see, I was going home when I had the pleasure, the great pleasure, of meeting you; and if I miss my train my mother will think I'm lost. She expects me to drive her out this afternoon."

"Then you don't live close to town?"

Baby said, her heart contracting with a sharp thrill of disappointment.

"Oh, dear, no; five miles off, at Amberley, a village across the river. But I hope your friends at the Cedars will bring you there before long, Miss Delamayne. My mother will, I am sure, be delighted to make your acquaintance."

"I shall like it very much," Baby answered, with great sincerity. "You must come and fetch us; and thank you so much, and good-bye, and please come soon, for they are all strangers at the Cedars, you know, and I shall feel so shy at first."

"What, with Jack to protect you!" laughed Clifton, inwardly doubting the possibility of this fascinating young lady feeling shy anywhere, but not insensible to the compliment to himself, nevertheless. "And I am a stranger too, you know; though you have been kind enough to let me forget it. Good-bye. There is my train, and I must run."

He did not run, however, but lifted his hat and stood bareheaded till the flyman had turned his horses and started, even though the impatient engine behind was beginning to show signs of moving. Baby leaned back, and folded her hands with a smile of satisfaction.

"Kitty was right," she murmured. "His manners are as perfect as his face; and how he fixed his eyes on me! I hope I don't look very hot and dusty, or that that horrid train hasn't given me a smut on my nose. I must get out of Jack, afterwards, what his friend thought of me. By the way, what on earth did he get so red for when I asked him to come back? I hope he's not in love with that romantic-named Enid."

He was pale enough at that moment, poor boy, leaning back in a corner of the railway carriage, with folded arms and furrowed brow, and just beginning to realize what a terrible change had fallen over his life in the last hour. For a year, a whole year, of that life he had been filled, heart and soul, with one object—the winning a certain woman to be his wife. He had striven so hard to correct his faults and give up those habits which made him unworthy of so fair a prize—had tried so patiently to please, and had thought himself so sure of success; and now, a bare five minutes in a sunny room, and all the sunshine of his heart was darkened, his love turned to bitterness, and all the best and warmest impulses of his nature poisoned.

Little wonder that he felt angry and miserable; and that he turned his mind, with something of impatient relief, from Enid's cold rejection to Baby's caressing manner and warm cordiality. She was a nice little thing; no nonsense about her, no nun-like sanctity masking a cruel coquetry; no—no *Merle*! Somehow, he found himself wondering how he had missed meeting her in St. Leonard's; and feeling more huffy with Jack than ever, in that, by staying behind, he had managed to snap up such a little rosebud.

Lady Gore was to the full as disappointed at her son's rejection as he himself could be. She could hardly believe it. After all her kindness to the girl, after Clif's delicacy in refraining from proposing for so long—oh, it was preposterous, incredible! A country banker's daughter to refuse a baronet's son, and the possible future member for Marshton Fallows! And to refuse him for a penniless boy, without any provision in the profession for which he was destined! Well, if it was credible, she could only say that she considered the young lady very much to be blamed for allowing the second offer to be made at all. Not know it was coming! That was all nonsense. Women always knew; and no one but a very cold-hearted girl or a vain coquette would lead a man on to offer love which she had predetermined to refuse.

No, Lady Gore did not think Enid a coquette, certainly; but the other thing would be disagreeable enough in a daughter, and so she really thought her darling might do better after all.

Clif combated all this, of course; laying the entire blame on himself, and making out Enid as white as snow; till even his mother relented and gave unwilling assent to his petition that the friendly relations between the two families should be in no wise disturbed, and that, as Enid had said, the past should be as if it had not been. But his arguments did not convince himself; and during the next few days he moped about very disconsolately, and half expecting every moment to see Jack arrive, full of warm regrets and explanations which should give his friend an excuse for forgiving and be comforted.

Vain expectation! Jack did not come at all; but on the fourth day Clifton received a note from him.

"DEAR CLIF—Will you come and dine on Thursday? There are one or two friends coming; and I have been wanting to thank you for your kindness to Miss Delamayne the other day. With united kind regards, in which she joins, I am, yours, &c.,

"JACK LEYBURN."

"You won't go?" Lady Gore said, as she read it.

"Oh, yes, I shall," replied Clifton. "If they choose to ignore my feelings, I don't want to parade them. No occasion for wearing the willow for ever, because one has been a fool, mother darling."

"Is he coming?" Baby asked, with suppressed eagerness, when Clifton's note returned.

And Enid answered "Yes," very sadly.

She had been averse to the invitation; and would rather, far rather, he had stayed away.

WHAT'S YOUR NAME?

IT is quite refreshing nowadays to come across a book combining amusement with instruction; but such a work is "Our English Surnames," by Charles Wareing Bardsley. The subject has already been treated by Mr. Lower, Miss Mulock, and Miss Yonge, and this volume may be considered a contribution to a branch of literature in which they distinguished themselves.

Mr. Bardsley divides his work into six chapters; in the first, treating of patronymic surnames; in the second, of local surnames; in the third, of surnames of office; in the fourth, of surnames derived from occupations in the country; in the fifth, of those proceeding from occupations in town; and in the sixth, of nicknames—crowning all with an exhaustive index, which gives the originals and changes of every name in the volume.

It would appear from the first chapter that Christian names have exercised influence on surnames. With the exception of Smith, all the most familiar names are to be found in this class. We were of opinion that Smith carried the day for frequency in the Post Office Directory; but Jones and Johnson, and even Thompson, leave poor Smith behind.

In the north of Europe, the process by which such surnames as these have arisen

is still in force. For instance, we will take Sweden. If a man named John has a son who is christened Peter, that son will be called Peter Johnson; and if he again has a son and calls him John, his surname will be John Peterson. Until recently, this style of nomenclature existed in Wales.

When this fashion of naming died out in these islands, not only the immediate successors, but all the descendants of such a John would take the name of Johnson for their surname. Simple as this process may seem, it has been greatly complicated and enlarged by the inevitable variations in the pronunciation and form of almost every baptismal name. We will take the case of David. From this come Davidson, Dawe, Dawson, and Dawes. From Isaac we get Hikke, Hickson, and Hicks; and from Walter, Watts, Watson, &c., ad libitum. But we are also indebted to the nursery terms of endearment for a large number—such as Johnnie, Teddie, and Charley; and, in addition, a whole host of kins—as Simpkins, Jenkins, Wilkins, Watkins, from Simon, John, William, and Walter.

In the greatly increased population in the eleventh and twelfth centuries these surnames considerably multiplied, rendering some plan necessary to distinguish Pompey from Cæsar. The changes were therefore, as it were, rung upon the most come-atable of names. Take, as instances, Roger, Ralph, and Hugh. Now let us see what we get from Roger: Rogers, Rodgers, and Roger-son; from Hodge, the nickname of Roger, Hodgkins, Hotchkins, Hoskins, Hodgkinson, Hodgson, and Hodson. From Ralph (of whom Domesday contained 38) we get Ralfs, Rolfs, Rowes, Rawsons, Rawlings, Rawlins, Rawlinsons, Rollins, Rollinsons, Rawkins, Rapkins, and Raprons.

From Hugh and its misspellings we have many surnames, the most common being Huggins, Hutchins, Hutchinson, Hugginson, Hullet, Hewlet, Huet, Hewet, Hewetson, Hewitt, Howson, Hughes, and Hewson. In Wales, the Norman patronymic frequently appears in the form of Pugh.

Mr. Bardsley informs us that, ever since the Conquest, the race for popularity among Christian names has been greatest between John and William. For some time after the arrival of the Normans, William bore the palm. In Domesday, for instance, there are 68 Williams, 48 Roberts, and 28 Walters, but only 10 Johns. So popular was the

name, that in 1173, at a banquet given at the court of Henry II., none but those bearing the name of William were allowed to dine; and no less than 120 Williams, all knights, sat down to table. But this majority of Williams gradually diminished, for in a century after, John had vanquished his opponent.

In 1347, London had, we are told, 133 councilmen, of whom 35 were Johns against 17 Williams; and owing to the canonization of Becket, Thomas sprang into notoriety. In 1385, the guild of St. George, Norwich, in a total of 376 names, possessed 128 Johns to 47 Williams and 41 Thomases.

We are informed that owing to the two saints who bore that name, and despite the hatred felt for the monarch who had also borne it, John retained its supremacy; and to this circumstance we owe the name of John Bull, as well as the Jean Goddam by which the French designated us all through the middle ages. William recovered its popularity with William of Orange and the Protestant Revolution, and it now stands at the head of all our names in the baptismal register, John having again sunk into the second place.

The second chapter is most interesting. In it the author gives the surnames taken from names of places.

Naturally the nobility and landed gentry took their names from their estates, &c., while a novel method was adopted in the nomenclature of their serfs and dependents—as John Above-brook, Thomas Behind-water, William At-lane, or At-brook, or At-well, or Symme At-style. To the last two of these we are indebted for our Styles and Atwells. In the same manner, the families of the Woods and Atwoods have come from the local appellation “atte wode;” while William Atte-Lea boasts a large progeny of Leighs, Leghs, and Lees, as well as Atlays and Attlees.

We now come to the third chapter, which is no less interesting, treating of the history of surnames derived from office and rank, such as Kitchener, Butler, Sewer, Latimer, and Napper. We owe the names of Bowyer, Fletcher, and Stringer to venery and the chase; and we may also name Arrowsmith and Tipper—the former the maker of the arrows, the latter the one who tipped them. The greenwood gives us Forster, Parker, Warrener, or Warner; while the original Saxon Woodreeve has a large pos-

terity of Woodruffs, Woodrows, Woodwards, Woodards, &c.

Chapters four and five treat nearly identically with the same class of names—viz., those derived from occupations in town and country, and might, we think, have been included under one head; the only difference being that the country names are frequently concerned with the production of the raw material, whereas those in the town are taken from trades and manufactures.

We find Smith heads the list in both chapters. Then we have our Tilers, Thatchers, and Slaters; our Carpenters, Wheelwrights, Cartwrights, &c., &c.

We may here mention that Smith originally meant a worker in any substance—not merely an artificer in metal, but even in wood. Blacksmiths worked in iron, brown-smiths in copper, whitesmiths in tin and latten, and redsmiths in gold—now termed goldsmiths.

In addition hereto, there were shoesmiths—merely another term for farriers—knife-smiths or cutlers, and locksmiths.

In the sixth and last chapter Mr. Bardsley treats of surnames derived from nicknames, and his task was undoubtedly of the weightiest, for he has contrived to compile an immense number of most curious instances. Did space permit we would quote a few; but we must ask our readers to take our word for it.

MRS. VAUGHAN'S SISTER.

IN TWO CHAPTERS.—I.

A LOW-ROOFED room, in a quiet house, in a quiet country town near the borders of South Wales. A bird singing cheerily in a wicker cage; a heap of soft, white, womanly work on the polished centre table; a little cottage piano, open and strewn with music—English, German, and Italian; a huge walnut tree rearing its mighty trunk against the blue summer sky, and thrusting its broad wrinkled leaves, like kindly hands, in at the open window, with its latticed panes, wide cushioned seat, and cosy chintz curtains. On the seat a lady—young, handsome, and dressed in the semi-bridal mourning widows affect nowadays, holding a newspaper in her hand, as she sits gazing out of the window. Crouched up on the floor, sobbing pitifully, with her face hidden in the round white arms crossed over the window-

seat, a girl with long fair hair, and a slender, childish figure.

That is my scene. Not much in it, is there?

"Edith," said the elder lady at last, though her eyes were still bent on the green trellis of leaf-work as she spoke, "it is foolish to take it in that way. I thought you had more spirit, I did indeed."

There was no answer—nothing but the long, quivering sobs; and she spoke again, rather uncomfortably this time.

"I am half sorry I showed it to you; but I didn't think you would have cared so much. And, really, to go on believing in a man who has forgotten all about you, and I don't believe ever really loved—"

"Oh, Beta, don't, don't!" broke in a childish, imploring voice, half strangled in sobs. "I cannot bear it. Oh! I cannot, cannot bear it!"

And the young head sank lower yet behind the tightly intertwined fingers which supported it.

"My dearest Edith! Such want of dignity! I know it is very sad, of course; and I'm exceedingly sorry—couldn't be more sorry if it had happened to myself. But you ought to try and bear up. You would not like all the acquaintances hereabouts to know you are breaking your heart for a man who never cared for you."

"Beta, you mustn't say that."

The head was lifted for a moment, disclosing a face wondrously fair and pretty, even though the large, innocent eyes, blue as forget-me-nots, were dripping with fast falling tears. There was no tinge of colour, though, in the round, soft cheek and parted Cupid lips; and Mrs. Vaughan's own handsome face contracted as she passed her hand pitifully over the rumpled yellow locks.

"Don't say that, Beta," the girl repeated, feverishly. "I can bear anything else while I think he loved me once. And he did; I know he did. Oh, Jack, Jack! how could you change?"

The face was hidden again, and Mrs. Vaughan said, softly—

"My dear child, love that changes so soon is not worth having. Now, do—do be calm. Your forehead is burning, and your hands like stone. Edith, you must not go on like this."

"Read it again," the girl said, hoarsely. "I can't believe it yet. Read it, every word."

And Mrs. Vaughan took up the paper and read aloud—

"On the 15th inst., at Malta, by the chaplain of the regiment, John Walters, captain in Her Majesty's 53rd Foot, to Amy Kerr Donaldson, only child of Philip Donaldson, of Kerr Manor, Dumfriesshire, and 16, Belgrave-square, London."

"Donaldson the banker, of course," added Mrs. Vaughan, musingly. "Enormously rich people. The girl must be an heiress."

Edith Vaughan had sunk back in a sitting position on the floor, her eyes fixed and wide. When Mrs. Vaughan finished, she held out her hand, saying, in a strange, stiff voice—

"Give it me. I—I can't understand."

"I will leave it with you," Mrs. Vaughan said, rising and laying the paper down on the window-seat. "You will be better alone for a little, I dare say; and I will call you when tea is ready. Try and cheer up, Edith. This would have been a very poor match for you, love."

"These violent, childish griefs soon quiet themselves," the widow said to herself, as she went away, closing the door behind her; and she was right. When, a couple of hours later, she returned to the room, Edith's grief was quite quiet. The girl was lying in a dead faint on the floor, the newspaper still clenched in her small, soft hand.

Edith and Mrs. Vaughan were sisters-in-law, the latter having married Garrett Vaughan, the girl's elder brother, half a dozen years back; but her husband was dead now, and Edith, who had lived with him since her parents' death, continued to live on with his widow; and, indeed, being a very gentle, clinging sort of little girl, would as soon have thought of flying as wishing to separate her fortunes from those of the bright, handsome woman of the world, who treated her with the protecting, if somewhat patronizing, kindness of an elder sister, and let her have quite as much of her own way as pretty Edith either expected or desired. She, for her part, was sincerely fond of the stately Beatrice, admired her intensely, confided in her as she would in her mother; and was quite content to pass her whole life under Mrs. Vaughan's kindly sway, provided no husband appeared to take her ruling into his own hands.

Fate, however, had already produced a candidate for that post, in a certain Jack Walters, captain in the 53rd Foot.

He had known Beatrice Vaughan before her marriage, when she was a gay young London beauty and he a beardless ensign; and in those days there had been talk of a flirtation between the dark-eyed Miss Trelawney and gay Jack Walters. But it had come to nothing in the end, Beatrice making a much better match by marrying young Doctor Vaughan, the fashionable physician of St. Gurthold's-on-Sea; and Jack Walters being consoled (if he needed consolation) by an intimation from his chief that the regiment was ordered to Ireland, and he must pack up his traps and make ready to accompany it on that day week.

It happened, however, in the first year of her widowhood, that tidings reached Mrs. Vaughan of the 53rd being quartered within a mile or so of St. Gurthold's-on-Sea; and, as might be supposed, Lieutenant Walters was not long in renewing his acquaintance with the fair relict, being received by that lady with all the warmth and cordiality due to a friend of such old standing. Unkind people even said that if Mrs. Vaughan's bereavement were not so recent, Lieutenant Walters stood a very fair chance of stepping into the doctor's vacant shoes; but of course I need not say there were no grounds for this gossip; and, indeed, if ever Jack Walters had cared for his gracious hostess, the fancy had long since died out, for his name had been high in the list of beauty-worshippers ever since; and now it soon became apparent to the most censorious that the charm which attracted him to that old-fashioned house, standing back in its quaint, flagged courtyard from the busy High-street, was not its tall and sable-clad mistress, but the slender, little, blue-eyed girl, with the gentle voice and winning smile, who made so innocently fair a contrast to her magnificent sister.

And Edith? Well, how *could* Edith help loving any one so universally charming, so bright, handsome, and light-hearted as Jack Walters? especially when Beatrice praised him so highly, and gave him such a hearty welcome that he soon became a more frequent visitor than any other of their male acquaintances—always very rare acquisitions in a country town? It was so easy to Edith to love those about her, that it was little wonder if Jack Walters soon made himself master of the tender little heart, so fresh

and unstained in its virginal simplicity; but when one day, Mrs. Vaughan being out, he took an opportunity of telling Edith that she had won him so entirely that he could have no rest or happiness till she had promised to be his wife, the little girl could hardly believe him; and raised a pair of such wondering, forget-me-not eyes to her tall lover's face that he almost smiled.

"Me!" she repeated, drawing back her body a little, but lacking courage or inclination—he hoped it was the latter—to remove her hand from his strong, close grasp. "You can't mean me, surely?"

"Who else?" laughed the young officer, taking advantage of the girl's bewilderment to draw her nearer to him. "Is it strange that any one should love you, Edith; or is it that you cannot love me that you look so surprised?"

He fancied the prisoned fingers closed a little over his at the second query; but the eyes were hidden now under their long lashes, and only a brighter rose flush in the soft cheeks made answer when he was silent.

"Edith, tell me," said Jack Walters; and his voice and touch were very tender as he put one finger under the dimpled chin, and tried to raise her drooping face. "Could you love me enough to be my wife? I know I'm not half worthy of you; but, oh! little one, I do love you so dearly. Don't you think you could? Edith, answer me."

Whereupon the sweet eyes were suddenly raised with a quick, guileless look of most undoubting affection, and Edith answered promptly—

"Jack, you know I love you, and you are a great deal too good for me."

It was a most undignified speech, of course; but "*que voulez vous?*" Edith Vaughan had never been through a single London season, or achieved the most innocent of flirtations. What wonder if she were rather backward in feminine coqueties?

Mrs. Vaughan received the news as soon as ever she came in. Jack was gone by then; and Edith rushed straight to her sister-in-law, and making a white necklace of her pretty little arms for that lady's neck, poured out the story of her wonderful joy and happiness, expecting, very naturally, an answering outburst of sympathy. This she did not get, however. Mrs. Vaughan was very much surprised; so much so, indeed, that she turned quite white and queer, and

seemed to think for some minutes that Edith must be under a delusion—persisting, even when convinced of the truth of her sister's story, in accusing Lieutenant Walters of being "only in play." After which she declared angrily that, if she had suspected he would abuse her hospitality by making love to "that child," she would never have encouraged his visits; and considerably damped the spirits of the "child" in question by being very cross and invalidish for the rest of the day.

Jack, however, came to the rescue on the morrow, and under his management Mrs. Vaughan became more amiable, and did not refuse her consent to the engagement—which, indeed, would have been useless, Edith being her own mistress—though she still affected to treat it rather in the light of a joke; and cautioned her sister repeatedly against setting her heart on a union with Jack Walters—

"The wildest fellow in the service, my love, and always in love with the last pretty face."

To which statements, which were undoubtedly founded on fact, poor little Edith would listen and believe, and feel very unhappy until Lieutenant Walters's next visit; and then, with her hand in his and his eyes on her face, how could she distrust his love, or believe that it would ever pass away?

This blissful state of things did not last long; for, unhappily, a few weeks after the engagement, Mrs. Vaughan (who had been complaining of ill-health lately, and accusing the air of St. Gurthold's as being the cause) carried off Edith for a trip to Paris; and during their absence the 53rd was ordered to Malta.

Jack and Edith were in despair at the latter tidings. The regimental orders came too suddenly to admit of the lover running over to Paris, and Edith vainly hoped Mrs. Vaughan would take her back to London; but her sister declared that, though she wished to do so, she really was not strong enough for the journey; and so the young couple were fain to content themselves by interchanging written vows of unalterable love and fidelity until the regiment should return to England, and they could afford to marry. This latter prospect seemed at best a distant one; for Lieutenant Walters's present pay, even when combined with a small allowance from a bachelor uncle, who

set his face against women and matrimony generally, was not sufficient to keep a wife on; while Edith was dependent on her sister-in-law for everything but a modest fifty pounds a year derived from her mother's marriage settlement.

"But what matters a little waiting while we love one another?" wrote Jack; "and Edith, darling, remember you have promised to love me. Don't forget me when I am away. I couldn't but be true to you; but I know more of the world than my little love, and I know her beauty and innocence will win her dozens of admirers more worthy of her than I am. So tell me in each letter that you are true to me, little one. I shall never doubt you till I cease to hear from you, or hear you care for some one else."

And so these young lovers were separated, and, for a time—indeed, all the six months they remained in Paris—letters went swiftly to and from Malta; and little Edith, quite unaffected by the admiration she won from Mrs. Vaughan's numerous guests, found her greatest pleasure in her winsome lover's tender missives, and was wont to confide the greater part of them to her still ailing sister; who, though rendered rather captious and irritable by invalidism, would have made a very pleasant and sympathetic confidante if she had not been so fond of shaking her head at Jack's vows of constancy, and recounting little anecdotes of his past infidelities to Edith's pained and shrinking ears.

When they left Paris, however, to travel in Germany, the letters necessarily slackened; for though Edith could write every day if she pleased, it was not so easy for Jack to answer when his lady love's address altered every day; and a one-sided correspondence being always somewhat lame and unsatisfactory, especially when the lady writer's letters are penned under the influences of constant hurry and fatigue, Edith found her pleasure in the foreign tour being greatly modified; and Mrs. Vaughan was quite amused at the undisguised pleasure with which her young sister heard the orders given for a homeward route.

It was three weeks since Edith had heard from Jack when she reached St. Gurthold's-on-Sea, and the girl rather expected to find a lengthy epistle awaiting her there; for her last letter had told him the day of their return home, and signified her wish for such a welcome. Alas! her hopes were doomed to disappointment. There was not even a

line; and she would have written again to reproach him had not Mrs. Vaughan told her that men hated to be scolded for not writing. "There was nothing which irritated them so much, and she had much better wait." So Edith, only anxious to please, waited; and, in return for her pains, received a few rather cross lines from her lover about a fortnight later, saying he "had heard from a friend that she was at home again; but, as she had not written, he supposed she didn't care to hear from him; so, as he was very busy, he could only make time for a few words." The gentleman, in fact, was evidently out of temper; and poor little Edith, who had never had a cold word from her hero before, was made so dreadfully unhappy that she first cried herself ill, and then wrote him a most voluminous epistle—all love and tenderness—which Mrs. Vaughan, who had sympathized most kindly in her trouble, herself carried to the post, that it might be sure of catching the evening mail.

The anxiety of both ladies was wasted, for that letter was never answered. It was in vain they waited week after week, in vain that Edith wrote again. They heard incidentally of balls and gaieties at Malta, later of Lieutenant Walters's long-looked-for promotion, and later still of the regiment being ordered to Corfu; but no word came from the fickle lover himself; nor was there any further mention of him till, barely six months after his departure, Mrs. Vaughan came into the sitting-room one day with an open newspaper in her hand, and calling the now pale and saddened girl to her side, first told her gently that she was the bearer of bad news, and then read her the paragraph already quoted.

ANGUISH IN PRINT.

IN THE STRICTEST CONFIDENCE.

TEAR THE THIRTEENTH.

PREPARING LESSONS.

THE first thing that Clàra and I did was to tear up the brown paper wrappers into tiny little bits, all but where the directions were written, and those we chewed up quite small, to throw out of the window with the little pieces. And oh, how nasty brown paper is to chew!—all tarry and bitter, like cold sailors must be when they eat one another in those dreadful boats that have not enough provisions, and when there's

"water, water everywhere, and not a drop to drink." Then I tore open the tiny note, and Clara did the same; and I had just read two lines, when I *felt* that I was watched, and looking up, there stood that horrid Miss Furness, just like some basilisk, or gorgon, or cockatrice, or some dreadful thing of that kind.

"The bell has rung for dinner, young ladies," she said, with her eyes devouring my note.

How I did tremble! but I knew that if I was not careful I should betray poor Achille; while, fortunately, Clara had been sitting so that she was not visible from the door, and so had time to slip her note into her pocket, while she pretended to have one of her boots off.

For a moment or two I was so scared that I did not know what to do. If I tried to hide the note, I knew that she would suspect that there was something wrong, while she would have been well aware whether there was a letter for me from home, since she always had the opening of the bag. What could I do? For a moment, I was about to crumple the paper up in my hand; but fortunately I restrained myself, and holding the paper boldly in my hand, I pretended that I had been writing out the aliquot parts of a shilling; and, as I doubled the note up slowly, I went on saying—

"Coming directly, ma'am—one farthing is one forty-eighth; one halfpenny is one twenty-somethingth—oh, fourth. Oh, dear! oh, dear! how hard it is, to be sure."

"You seem to have grown very industrious, Miss Bozerne," said Miss Furness, looking very doubtfully at the paper; and I was afraid that she would smell it, for it was so strong of that same scent that Achille always used.

"Yes, isn't she?" said Clara, coming to the rescue; "but I do not think it will last, ma'am."

I could have hugged her for that; for I knew that the tiresome old thing suspected something to be wrong, and was mixing it up with the morning's adventure. But nothing more was said, and we descended to dinner, and there I was with that note burning in my pocket, and not a chance could I get to read it; for so sure as I tried to be alone, go where I would, there was that Miss Furness's favourite, Celia Blang, after me to see what I was doing.

At last, during the afternoon lessons, I

could bear it no longer; so I went and sat down by the side of Clara.

"What does he say, dear?" I whispered.

"Wants me to meet him to-night," she wrote on her slate, and rubbed it out directly. And then again she wrote, "What does he say, dear?"

"I have not had a chance to see yet," I dolefully replied. "There's the raging Furness watching me, so pray don't look up. She suspects something, and I can't move without being spied."

"Poor old darling!" wrote Clara on her slate.

"I'm going to trust you, my dear," I said. "When I push my Nugent's Dictionary over to you, take it quietly, for my note will be inside. And I want you to take it, and go away quietly and read it, and then come and tell me what he says; for that old thing is so suspicious, and keeps watching me—and I dare not attempt it myself."

So I managed to pass the note to Clara; and then, on a piece of paper, I wrote down the aliquot parts, and then folded it so as to pull out next time. I saw Miss Furness watching me; and there I sat, with my cheeks burning, and wondering what was in my note, and whether, after all, I had done foolishly. For was Clara to be trusted?

"But she is so mixed up with it herself," I said, "she dare not play me false."

And then I sat on and on, pretending to be studious, and wondering what kept her so long. I would have gone after her, only I knew that Miss Furness was keeping an eye upon me; and sometimes I half thought that she must know something about the night when I went down to the elms; but directly after I felt that she did not, or she would have told my Lady Blunt directly. But the fact of the matter was, she was suspicious about that note, and all because I was so clumsy in trying to throw dust in her eyes.

Five minutes—ten minutes—a quarter of an hour had passed, and still no Clara. Then another quarter of an hour, and still she did not come. "Whatever shall I do?" I thought to myself—"surely she is not deceiving me?" And then, just as my spirits were regularly boiling over, heated as they were by impatience and vexation, in she came, with the note in her hand; and I saw her laugh maliciously, and cross over to Patty Smith.

"Oh," I said to myself, "I shall die of shame."

And I'm sure no one can tell what agony I suffered while the creature was reading something to Patty, when they both had a hearty laugh; after which Clara began to double the note up, as, with eyes flashing fire, I sat watching that deceitful creature, not daring to move from my seat.

"Miss Fitzacre, bring me that piece of paper you have in your hand," squeaked Miss Furness, who had been watching her like a cat does a mouse.

Oh, if I could but have screamed out, or fainted, or seized the paper, and fled away! But I could not move, only sit suffering—suffering horribly, while Clara gave me another of her malicious smiles, as she crossed sulkily over to Miss Griffin's table, drew the paper from her pocket, laid it down, and then our chère institutrice laid a paper weight upon it, for she had a soul far above curiosity, while Clara came and sat down by me—poor me, who trembled so with fear and rage that my teeth almost chattered; for I could think of nothing else but Mrs. Blunt and the Furness reading poor Achille's note.

I did not know how to be angry enough with myself, for being so simple as to trust Clara; and I'm sure I should not, only I fancied her truthful and worthy; but now, I could have killed her—I could, I was so enraged.

"You horribly treacherous, deceitful thing!" I whispered; "when, too, I trusted you so fully."

"Why, what is the matter?" she said, quite innocently.

"Don't look at me like that," I whispered.

"How could you be so false?"

"Oh, that's what you mean, is it?" she said. "Serve you right for not trusting me fully from the first, as I did you."

"Worthy of trust, are you not?" I said, angrily.

"Will you be quite open with me for the future, then?" she said.

"Open!" I hissed back, "I'll go to Mrs. Blunt, and tell everything, I will—everything; and won't spare myself a bit, so that you may be punished, you wicked, good-for-nothing, bad-behaved, deceitful and treacherous thing, you!" I said.

"Take breath now, my darling," she said, tauntingly.

"Breath," I said—"I wish I had none.

I wish I was dead, I do." And I could not help a bit of a sob coming then.

"Poor Achille!" she whispered. "What would he do then?"

"Oh, don't talk to me—don't," I said, bending down my burning face over a book, not a word in which could I see.

"It did tease you, then, did it?" said Clara, laughing.

"Tease me, you heartless thing you," I said. "Hold your tongue, do! I'll never forgive you—never, Clara!"

"Less talking there," said Miss Furness—the Griffin.

"Ugh! you nasty old claw puss," said Clara, in an undertone.

After a few minutes' silence, I began again.

"I did not give you credit for it, Clara," I said.

"Thought you were not going to speak to me any more," she said.

"Oh, it's too bad," I whispered; "but you will be sorry for it some day."

"No, I shan't, you little goose you. It was not your note at all," she said. "I only did it to tease you, and serve you out for trying to deceive me, who have always tried to be a friend to you from the very first."

"Oh, my own, dear, darling Clara," I cried, in a whisper, "is this true? Then I'll never, never do anything without you again, and tell you everything; and am not cross a bit."

"But I am," she cried; "see what names you have been calling me."

"Ah, but see how agonizing it was, dear," I whispered. "Only think of what you made me suffer. I declare I shall burst out into a fit of hysterical crying directly."

"No, no, don't do that," said Clara.

"Then make haste, and tell me what he said, so as to change my thoughts."

"Guess," said Clara, sliding my own dear, darling note into my hand once again.

"Oh, pray, pray tell me," I whispered. "Don't, whatever you do, don't tease me any more. I shall die if you do."

"No, don't," she said, mockingly, "for poor Achille's sake."

"I would not serve you so, Clara," I said, humbly, the tears the while gathering in my eyes.

And then she began to tell me that the note was very long, and stated how he had been interrupted by the policeman, and had not ventured since; but that he and the



Signor had arranged to come that night, and they would be under the end of the conservatory at eleven, if we could contrive to meet them there.

"And of course we can," said Clara. 'How they must have been plotting together!'"

"But we never can manage it," I whispered, with a strange fluttering coming over my heart.

"I can, I can," whispered Clara, squeezing my hand; "but be careful, for here comes the Griffin, and she's as suspicious as, can be."

We were supposed to be busy preparing lessons all this time; for this was one of the afternoons devoted to private study, two of which we had every week, instead of what Mrs. Blunt called the vulgar institution of half-holidays.

"If I have to speak again about this incessant talking, Miss Fitzacre, your conduct will be reported to the lady principal," said Miss Furness. "And as for you, Miss Bozerne, be kind enough to take a seat in another part of the room. There is a chair vacant beside Miss Blang."

Miss Furness did not hear what Clara said in an undertone, or she would have hurried off post haste to make her report. But as she did not, she returned to her seat, and soon after we were summoned to our tea.

TEAR THE FOURTEENTH.

A TRYST.

I USED to get so vexed with the tiresome old place, even if it was pretty, and you could sit at your open window and hear the nightingales singing; and even though some other bird had made me hear its singing, too, and found its way right to my poor heart. There was so much tiresome formality and niggling; and if one spoke in a way not according to rule, there was a fine or imposition, or something of that kind. We never went to bed, we never got up—we retired to rest, and arose from slumber; we were summoned to our lessons, dinner was always announced, we pursued or resumed our studies, we promenaded daily, or else took recreation in the garden; and did everything, in short, in such a horrible, stiff, starchy way, that we all seemed to be in a constant state of crackle; and every variation was looked upon as so much rumpling, while I'm sure our *lady principal*

could not have been more vulgar if she had tried.

The meeting appointed in the last chapter was repeated again and again at the end of the conservatory; for we had only to slip down into the drawing-room quietly, open the shutters, pass through the French window into the conservatory, draw the shutters after us or not, and then raise one of the sash windows at the end, where we could stand and talk. For the gentlemen never once came in, for fear that their footsteps should show upon the beautiful, clean, white stones. One meeting was so much like another, that it is hardly worth while to describe them; while no incident worthy of notice occurred until one night. And oh! how well can I recall everything in connection with that disastrous occasion!

We had been for a walk that evening, and I had been most terribly scandalized by the encounter we had had with a policeman. We were just outside the town, when all at once I felt my cheeks flush, as they always do now at the sight of a constable; for there was one coming along the road in front, and something seemed to whisper that we had met before. It was misery and ruin to be recognized, and I set my teeth hard, and tried not to see him; but do what I would, my eyes seemed determined to turn towards the wretch; and they did, too, just as we were passing, and it was he—and the odious creature knew me directly, and pushed his tongue into his cheek in the most vulgar way imaginable. Clara saw it, and gave me a push with her elbow; but, fortunately, I do not think any one else saw the dreadful fellow.

We had to hurry back, too, for a storm came on, and the big drops were plashing heavily upon our parasols before we reached the Cedars; while just as we were safely housed, the lightning flashed and the thunder rolled incessantly.

I was not afraid of the storm, for I was humming over the "Tempest of the Heart," and wondering whether it would be over soon enough to allow of our assignation being kept; while I grew quite nervous and fidgety as the evening wore on. However, the rain ceased at last, and the thunder only muttered in the distance, where the pale summer lightning was glancing; and when at last we retired to our rooms, and looked out of the open window, the fresh scent which came up from the garden was de-

licious. The moon shone, but with a pale, misty, and sobered light; while the distant lightning, which played fitfully at intervals, seemed to make the scene quite sublime.

After sitting looking out for a while, we closed the windows with a sigh, for we knew we should be reported to Mrs. Blunt if our lights were not out; and then, as we had often done before, we pretended to undress, listening all the while to the senseless prattle of Patty Smith, which seemed now so childish and nonsensical.

"I wonder your mars," she said, "don't send you each a cake sometimes. It would be so nice if they did; and I always do give you a piece of mine."

"There, don't talk so, pray, Patty," I said, after listening to her hungry chatter for ever so long. "Pray be quiet, and I will give you a shilling to buy a cake."

"No, you won't," said Patty.

"Yes, I will indeed," I said, "if you will be a good girl, and go to sleep."

"Give it me now, then," said the stupid thing.

And I did give her one, and if she did not actually take it, though I believe she was quite as old as Clara or I; but all the while so dreadfully childish, any one, from her ways, would have taken her for nine or ten—that is, if they could have shut their eyes to her size. However, at last she fell asleep, and we sat waiting for the trysting-hour.

"Do you know," said Clara, in a whisper, "I begin to get tired of spoiling one's night's rest for the sake of meeting them. It was all very well at first, but it's only the same thing over and over again. I know all about beautiful Italy now, and its lakes and vineyards, and the tyrant Austrian, and the Pope, and patriotism, and prisons, and all that sort of thing; while he seems to like to talk about that more than about you know what, and one can't help getting a little too much of it sometimes."

"Oh, for shame, Clara!" I said; "how can you talk so? It is not loyal. What would some one say if he knew?"

"I don't know, and I don't—"

"Oh, hush! you sha'n't say so," I exclaimed; "for you do care—you know you do."

And then I sat silent and thinking for some time; for it was as though something began to ask me whether I also was not a little tired of hearing about "ma patrie" and

"la belle France," and whether I liked a man any the better for being a patriot, and mixed up with plots for dethroning the Emperor.

I should not have thought anything of the kind if it had not been for those words of Clara, and I soon crushed it down; for I was not going to harbour any such cruel, faithless thoughts as that. I had told Achille again and again that I loved him very dearly; and of course I did, and there was an end of it. But still, though I bit my lips very hard, and tried not to think of such things, it did seem tiresome, I must own, to have to sit up waiting so long; and, like Clara, I did begin to long for a change. If we could have met pleasantly by day, or had a quiet evening walk, and all on like that, it would have been different; but, after the first flush of the excitement and romance, it did begin to grow a little tame.

"Heigh—ho!—ha!—hum!" said Clara, interrupting my reverie by a terrible yawn, so that had it been daylight I'm sure any one might have seen down her throat, for she never attempted to put her hand before her mouth.

But I could not tell her of it; for I had only the minute before been yawning so terribly myself that I was quite ashamed. For really there seemed to be so little romance about it.

"Let's go to bed in real earnest," said Clara. "I'm sure I will, if you'll agree."

"For shame!" I exclaimed. "What would they say?"

"Oh, I don't know," said Clara; "they've disappointed us before now."

"But then they could not help it," I replied.

"No, nor I can't help it now," said Clara; "for I'm so sleepy."

"But it would look so," I said, repressing another yawn; for I, too, was dreadfully sleepy.

"I don't care," said Clara. "I don't want to hear about the revolution to-night. It is such dull work, all four of us being together, and watching every movement. It isn't as if we were alone."

"I do declare I'm quite ashamed of you," I said. "Why, it would not be prudent for us to go alone."

"Oh, no, of course not," said Clara, mockingly. "Nobody you know ever went down to the elms all alone by herself."

"But you knew of it," I said.

"No thanks to you, miss, if I did; so come, now," replied Clara.

I saw that it was of no use to dispute with her, so I let the matter drop; and then, opening the window, I leaned out, when I heard voices whispering in what seemed to be the shrubbery, just beyond the conservatory cistern; and then, withdrawing my head, I hastily told Clara.

"Why, they are soon to-night," she whispered, as, carefully closing the window, I then opened the door, and we stood at the top of the great staircase, after going on tiptoe past the Fraulein's room.

We listened patiently for some time, as we stood hand in hand; while neither of us now seemed disposed to yawn. Then we quickly and quietly descended; but before we reached the bottom I recollected that I had left our door open, when it was a great chance if some one did not hear Patty snoring.

"Go back and shut it, there's a dear," I said, in a whisper.

"No, you go, dear," said Clara. "I'll wait for you."

But I did not like going alone; neither did she. So we went together and shut it; and then I stood once more listening at the foot of the stairs, when I fancied I heard the click of a door handle. But it was not repeated; and feeling sure that it was only fancy, we quietly unlocked the drawing-room door, glided in, closed it after us, and then unfastened the shutters of the French window, when we stood in the conservatory, at the end of which was the sash, giving, as Achille called it, upon the rain water tank—whose very broad edge was covered with ivy, upon which they used to climb from the low terrace wall that ran down to the little fountain of which I have spoken before, and then stand in the empty cistern.

"I always put on my old sings when I come, *chère Laure*," poor Achille used to say to me, which of course was not very complimentary; but, then, all his estates had been confiscated by that horrid French Cæsar and my Lady Blunt was too fond of money to part with much for her teachers.

When we peeped out of our window there was no one there; so we pulled up the sash very gently, and stood waiting till, in each of our cases, Romeo came.

ONLY A YEAR.

CHAPTER XI.

"I AM LISTENING."

EARLY the next afternoon, soon after one o'clock, Archer Thyrlé was at the door of the Manor House. He had gone over with the purpose of telling Gilfred Kyriel not only his adventure of yesterday, but the whole story relating to himself and Hasson Grainger, and of being guided by his advice as to whether he should now make any effort to befriend the man who had injured him, or whether he should leave him to his fate. Thyrlé was, therefore, very much disappointed to hear that Mr. Kyriel was from home—in London, the servant thought. In answer to his further inquiries, he heard that Mrs. Kyriel was still upstairs, that Mr. Brooke had driven Miss Kittie to Hensley Towers, and that only Miss Kyriel was at home.

Poor Phillis, who had been waiting breathless during this long dialogue, was soon relieved by his entrance. Phillis had calculated on his coming to-day, as he had not been seen yesterday, and had excused herself, in consequence, from a luncheon party at Hensley; and now she felt nervous and distressed, and wished she had not done so. Excepting on the occasion of Thyrlé's first call, Phillis had always avoided a tête-à-tête with him; and no schoolgirl of fifteen could have felt more embarrassed than she did now. But at his first quiet, businesslike words she recovered herself—

"I am very sorry to find your brother is away, Miss Kyriel. I wished particularly to see him."

"Indeed! I am very sorry too. He has gone to town about some affair connected with his promotion, and I am afraid he will not be home again, except just for to-morrow evening. He does not mean to miss the Hensley ball if he can help it."

"There is no opportunity there, I suppose, of saying a dozen words to him quietly?"

"Hardly."

And she wondered what he could possibly want to say.

"And he leaves here the following morning?" continued Thyrlé.

"Yes, by the train at eight o'clock; and will join his regiment at Cork."

He was silent, thinking deeply.

At last Phillis said—and he heard with surprise the tremble in her voice—

"I suppose there is nothing that I could do instead of my brother?—or Mr. Brooke? he will be at home this evening."

But Mr. Brooke was very far from Thyrlé's ideal of a confidant; and he declined him, with thanks—

"But you, Miss Kyriel," he added, rather earnestly, "you could help me, if you will give me half an hour or so of your time and attention. I can rely on your clearness of judgment—perhaps more readily than on your brother's, even; and your woman's wit will find a way to do what I wish."

Phillis's cheeks coloured at these words as they never did under the most exquisite flattery from other men, and her heart beat quick with real pleasure.

"I am listening," she said; and he began.

"It is six years ago, next summer, since I took Hasson Grainger to spend the long vacation at my father's house, in Cumberland. We were college friends; though I was a year or two older than he, and had just completed my last term. My chief chum was Ned Brooke, Frank Brooke's eldest brother; but I was very fond of young Grainger, and felt a little proud at being able to bring such an accomplished, handsome young fellow among my friends. Especially proud was I to introduce him to the fair daughter of our village clergyman—Alice Graham."

His eyes were looking away into the far past, and Phillis, watching him, saw the cloud fall on his face which she had known the mere name of Hasson Grainger bring over it; and he kept his voice steady with difficulty.

"She was a singularly beautiful girl—in my eyes, the most lovely I have ever seen. She was, I thought, good as she was fair, and she had promised to be my wife. We had known each other from childhood, and I was as sure of her affection as I was of my own for her. And I loved her with my whole strength. She was dearer to me than anything or all in the world besides."

Thyrlé again came to a pause, and presently glanced up at Phillis, apologetically.

"It is so long," he said, "since I have spoken of her, that I find now it is difficult to do so. We lived, at the time I am speaking of, in a house near the coast; and in nearly all our fishing, boating, or adven-

turous expeditions, Alice accompanied us. She was fully as accustomed to a country life as myself, and nearly as hardy; and we used to feel dull and stupid without her sweet face and merry laugh. Imperceptibly, I could afterwards see that a change came over Alice's manner to me; but if I noticed it at the time, I thought little of it—still less did I suspect. The first time that the notion of any treachery ever dawned upon me was one evening which she had been spending at my father's house, when she said she would have Mr. Grainger's escort home instead of mine; and I noticed that she trembled and turned pale as she bade me good night. I was angry, and Grainger's manner and chance words drove my passion almost beyond my control during the following days. He paid Alice the most devoted attention, which she readily accepted, but with, as I thought, a guilty conscience; for her smiles now were forced and uncertain, and the bloom was dying away from her cheeks.

"One summer morning things came to a climax.

"Heaven knows I never fancied myself a good-looking fellow, in my best days; and no one was better able than I to estimate the immense advantage Grainger had over me in personal beauty. He was the handsomest man I ever saw; and, until I came to hate him, I never looked at his face without pleasure. But in sports and exercises of all kinds—rowing, fishing, riding, leaping, wrestling—such as boys in Cumberland delight in, I far excelled him. I was much the stronger.

"It was on the tenth of August—a bright fresh morning, the west wind blowing the salt breeze in my face as I went to the beach to meet Elcy at our accustomed place. I took her some late white roses I had found, of a certain kind she was very fond of. I came in sight of her, sitting under the cliff with Grainger.

"She was crying—he holding her hand.

"Nay, I cannot tell you!" he interrupted himself, fiercely—"my temper is never of the coolest, but at that moment it was at white heat, and I suffered an agony I have never known before or since.

"When I came up, they were talking and laughing. Blind fool that I was! I was too passionate ever to see clearly. She held some roses in her hand, and I asked her if Mr. Grainger had given her them. She

answered 'Yes.' And I offered her mine—if she would fling the others away. She might have seen my meaning; but, with an effort, she replied, coquettishly, that she liked the red ones best.

"I flung my flowers insultingly in Grainger's face.

"Say good-bye to your old favourites, Alice, and take up with the new,' I said.

"And hearing only Grainger's laugh, I turned away.

"Later in the day, when I was thinking in desperation over my misery, I met Grainger in the shrubbery. He had a message for me, he said, from Alice. It was to the effect that she wished her engagement with me to be broken off, and returned me by his hands the gifts I had made her. Other words of his own, which I need not repeat—the mock compassion, the derision of which so stung me, already tortured beyond my endurance—moved me so, that I took him by the collar, and, with a tough dog-whip I chanced to have in my hand, I lashed him till his clothes were in ribbons, his blood streaming to the ground from gashes which sicken me now to remember. Until then, I never knew what a cruel devil was within me. It gave me pleasure to know that he writhed, and grovelled, and knelt to me, under a grasp which held him unrelentingly—even when he could struggle no longer. My whip at length broke short off in my hand, and I flung Grainger from me. He fell on the ground, and I cared not if he was fainting or dying.

"I went to the house, collected what money I had, told my father I was going abroad for a short time, and left at once for Paris. My father died a few months after this, while I was still abroad, and I was the only heir to all he possessed. I travelled in all sorts of wild places for more than a year, not knowing whether I had murdered Grainger or not in my mad fury.

"It was, therefore, with a sensation of relief that I one day encountered him in the Rue St. Honoré, in Paris, where I happened to be, on my way to Algeria.

"I stopped involuntarily. He held out his hand, and laughed as I steadily declined to see it.

"Where is Alice?' I demanded.

"He shrugged his shoulders, and persuaded me to enter a café we were passing, and he would tell me all I wanted to know. Seeing that the room we went into had plenty

of occupants, he began, in his semi-sneering tone, to tell me what he seldom spoke—the truth.

"He commenced by saying I had been a great fool; that at the beginning Alice had only altered her manner because he had persuaded her that I had; and that to win back my affection, which he told her I had bestowed on some one else, she must try some coquettish arts, which the poor little thing accordingly did, under his directions, and a better judge than I about such things might soon have detected what miserable failures they were; that the message he ought to have delivered along with the trinkets was that, as Mr. Grainger had told her about the lady I loved better than her, and that as she (Alice) only stood in the way of my happiness, she would release me from my engagement, which she understood was my wish.

"She wrote that,' added Grainger, 'and I opened the note and tore it up, and delivered to you a verbal message of my own composing.'

"I asked him why he told me all this, and he laughed mockingly, as he answered—

"Revenge is sweet.'

"I asked again where Alice was then, and he replied—

"Dead.'

"I remember saying, 'You have more than avenged yourself,' before my brain grew confused, and for the next few minutes the rush of my anguish and remorse seemed to deprive me of my other senses. When I recovered, he was gone. I spent the next day or two in going from one hotel to another in search of him. I found him, living like a prince, at the Louvre.

"In the presence of several of his friends, I walked into his room, struck him across the face with my thick riding glove, and, in reply to his anger and his friends' interference, said that I would meet him with any weapon, when and where he chose. After some demur on his part, and considerable incitement from his friends, a certain place in the Bois de Boulogne was fixed upon for the next morning; and I awaited him there at the appointed hour. He never came, but his servant brought me a note—a paltry excuse. He was called to England, he said, by the sudden illness of his father, and hoped at some future time to be more fortunate, &c. I went straight to the old village on the coast of Cumberland. It was

nearly two years since I had left it in the madness of anger and grief; and I returned only with the hope of seeing a grave. But in his cruel wish to wound me he had been careless, and had deceived me again. Alice was not dead; but even I, when I saw her, had no hope. She never knew, until my return, that I had been true to her—that the story Grainger had persuaded her to believe, was false; and she had broken her heart—I had come back too late. But when bitter curses broke from my lips on Hasson Grainger, she said to me, 'Forgive him,' and she told me how insignificant looked these joys and sorrows of ours to her on the brink of the great, dark river; and by her death-bed I repeated words from her pale lips, binding me never to seek to avenge myself upon him. 'Let God repay,' she said. And there was nothing I would not have said or done to have given the true heart I had so cruelly wronged a moment's peace."

Thyrle paused, and Phillis asked him—

"Did Hasson wish to take your place with her?"

"Yes. He tried every persuasion and artifice, after I had gone, to win her to marry him; but she would not listen to him, and at length would not see him; but in her simplicity she had never entertained a suspicion of what he had done, but thought he only meant to be kind, and console her for my loss. I had less cause to have imagined such treachery on his part, as during our friendship at college he used to talk enthusiastically about a girl to whom he was engaged, and often had described to me her dark, fitful style of beauty—so different to poor, gentle Elcy's.

"Well, I told you, I went home too late—I lost her.

"Soon after, I met my old friend Ned Brooke, who had entered the army; and I persuaded him to spend his long leave in travelling with me, which he has done every year since. It was at Naples, a year or so after I had last seen him, that we met Grainger. We were dining at the country house of a Neapolitan gentleman, whose acquaintance Brooke and I had made in Paris. *Ecarté* was de rigueur after the dinner. I never cared for cards, but that night I played as I never did before or afterwards; for Grainger, in his insolent way, defied me. All the spectators saw before long that one of us two was to be ruined, and it seemed

likely to be me. I had lost thousands to him.

Ned implored me to come away; but neither his persuasions nor distress could move me when Grainger's blue eyes shone in mocking triumph at me, and there remained a hope of redemption. And my turn came at last.

"The luck turned—I won on nearly every deal. He doubled the stakes. I retrieved my losses, and again Ned urged me to go. But Grainger dared me to another trial, and I consented. I won as rapidly as he did at first; the triumph vanished from his eyes, and his face grew pale and desperate. At length he threw down his cards—

"Are you content?" he said. 'You have ruined me; my father's whole fortune would not pay what I owe you.'

"It was many thousands—I forget the exact sum; but I made him formally sign an acknowledgment of his debt, Ned being witness; and then, remembering the words of the dead girl, I tore the paper to atoms, and scattered them to the winds.

"I seemed fated to encounter him. It was at a place where I certainly believed myself safe from him that I met him next. Ned Brooke had asked me so often and so pressing to spend a few days at his father's house, that I at last consented to do so. We went together, to be in time for an annual sort of rustic fête, which old Mr. Brooke and a few other squires in the neighbourhood got up for the farmers and tenantry. We were expected to take an active part in the proceedings; and accordingly, I was playing bowls with a set of boors, and doing my very best to make myself agreeable and enter into the spirit of the game, when a party of ladies and gentlemen came to look on.

"To my amazement and indignation, among them I saw Hasson Grainger coolly watching me.

"I was so disconcerted, that it was by the greatest effort I contrived to go on bowling at all; and as it was, I never threw a good ball after seeing him. I took no further notice of him after the first glance; and having taken part in the various amusements, I came to a place where a leaping-bar was erected. I had always been as a boy particularly good at jumping; so, as a new excitement, I offered half a sovereign as a prize to those who would jump against me; and now and then, by way of keeping up

the good humour, I allowed the prize to be won. Perhaps Grainger was deceived by this, for he had known my powers in this way in former times; but, however this might be, he came forward, and offered me odds that he could beat me.

"I replied that I scarcely thought it worth while that he should bet with me, but that I was willing to accept his challenge.

"He was no contemptible adversary—lightly built and active, though rather wanting in strength.

"The bar was raised higher and higher. A crowd collected to watch us; and after every leap that he succeeded in, I had the bar raised, and outdid him.

"At length—it was very high, I had gone over—he tried it, and failed.

"‘You have won again,’ he muttered, and held out to me the few sovereigns which formed his bet.

"‘I declined to bet with you,’ I said.

"And he answered—

"‘I offered to bet you certain odds, and here is your money.’

"I took it without looking at it, and flung it among the gaping crowd of rustics. During the confusion which ensued, Grainger caused the bar to be raised almost a foot higher than when I had last cleared it, and came back to me with his mocking smile, which has always had the power to almost madden me.

"‘That would be a leap worthy of Mr. Thyrlé’s powers,’ he said. ‘I should like to see any man who dare try that.’

"The height looked frightful: it seemed to take away the breath of the bystanders to even see it.

"‘You dare not try it, I suppose?’ he sneered, as I remained quite still and silent.

"Ned came forward, and old Mr. Brooke.

"‘What folly is this?’ said the old gentleman. ‘Take that bar down.’

"‘Thyrlé, are you mad?’ Ned whispered, trying to draw me away.

"‘I knew he couldn’t do it,’ exclaimed Grainger, triumphantly. ‘I’d bet any money he couldn’t.’

"I turned round, and faced him.

"‘How much will you bet?’ I demanded.

"‘What you choose.’ But his eyes quailed as I met them. ‘Say a thousand.’

"And I replied—

"‘Done!’

"Mr. Thyrlé, it is an impossibility!’ demonstrated old Mr. Brooke; and poor Ned

kept on telling me I would break my neck, and that I was an obstinate fool.

"Ned afterwards told me that I went through the preliminaries of taking off my coat, boots, collar, &c., which I had not thought necessary before; but I have no recollection except of a crowd of staring, silent faces, and the terrific height of the bar looming before me.

"I remember I turned to where Grainger stood, and asked—

"‘Must it be the first trial?’

"And he answered—

"‘Yes.’

Then I sped down the alley of people who were looking on, and sprang with my whole strength—I seemed to myself almost to fly; and those who saw told me I went above the bar several inches.

"Grainger came to me after the roar of applause had died away, very pale and crestfallen, and asked me to speak with him. Reluctantly I complied, and he told me a plausible story of his embarrassments, his father’s anger against him, and the distress of his people at home.

"‘A thousand pounds,’ he said, ‘would clear me. It was in hopes of winning it that I dared you to jump.’

"Though I believed in my heart that he had been more actuated by the hope that I might, as Ned said, ‘break my neck,’ than even winning the bet, yet the old, sweet words had still power with me—‘Forgive him; the Lord will repay.’

"I went to the house, and signed a cheque for one thousand pounds, which I gave him, and for doing which I have no doubt he thought me a great fool.

"I afterwards found that he had made a trifling alteration in the cheque, and had changed the one thousand I had written into six—trusting, no doubt, and safely, to my forbearance. He does not even know, though he probably guesses, that I am aware of his fraud.

"You may imagine, Miss Kyriel, how startled I was when I heard the name of Hasson Grainger fall familiarly from your lips; you may imagine how enraged I was with myself to find I had bought an estate not more than ten or twelve miles from his father’s house. I must have heard, long ago, that this was his native county; but I had forgotten it. And I discovered that I was liable to meet this man—who had designedly marred my happiness, and who

hated me with a far more bitter hatred than I bore him—at every house I was asked to. I was to be subjected to his insolence in the hunting field, and to be slandered by him, behind my back, in the presence of honourable gentlemen. That scene at the Heldon Quarry I remember you were present at—it only added one to the string of injuries Grainger has tried to do me. It was but a trifle, and I could afford to pass it over and forget it; but it was yesterday that he ventured too far, and tried me beyond my strength.”

Thyrle gave a brief sketch of the strange scene which had taken place in the billiard-room at Knollingham, and then added—

“I believe he is badly off—has little or no money; and I should not like him to be able to say—in this world or the next—that my hand had helped to drive him to destruction. This is what I came to ask your brother’s advice about. What shall I do, Miss Kyriel?”

Phillis looked up at him with a face so brimming with glad admiration—with unfeigned, unmistakable happiness—that he wondered, though he felt gratified by her interest for him. This story of his had very much altered her opinion of mankind. She had so despised men, so laughed at their foolish subservience to herself—until she met him! She had classed them all as wicked and amusing, weak and unstable, or obstinate and stupid. Thyrle, being none of these, had been a mystery to her; and now he had solved her problem. She had at length, she thought, found a man who came up to her ideal standard of generosity and natural nobility. He smiled at her enthusiastic face, but she spoke gravely—

“You are wiser and better than I am. You must decide on what you will do; and if I can in any way help you, I will.”

Thyrle pondered two or three minutes; then said—

“Well, I wish to send some money to Grainger—anonymously; but I don’t know where he is, or how to find out his address.”

After a moment’s reflection, she said—

“Will you mind a walk of two or three miles? If you don’t, we have time to go over to Akenhurst this afternoon. If any one is likely to be told where he is, it is Grace—his favourite sister. It is less than two miles there by the fields.”

“I am in no great hurry, I assure you, Miss Kyriel,” he replied, with a smile.

And in a few minutes she had donned her hat and jacket, and they started on their walk.

TABLE TALK.

THE making of the largest and most powerful steam hammer in the world has just been completed at Woolwich. It is described as a thirty-ton hammer, but its falling power is really within a few pounds of forty tons. To increase its striking force, steam is brought into use to drive it down from the top, and by the use of this additional impetus—viz., “top steam”—it is equivalent to allowing this ponderous mass to fall of its own weight a distance of eighty feet. It has not yet been determined what may be the actual force of a blow that it may strike. It has to be fed by several furnaces, one of which is large enough to make a comfortable dwelling-house, and an omnibus might be driven in at the doorway: the door alone weighs seven tons. The Emperor of Russia is expected to pay a visit to the arsenal about the third week in May, when the heaviest portion of an eighty-ton gun will be welded in his presence; but as the noise created by the steam blast, when the hammer is at work, can be heard a distance of some two or three miles, we hope, for the sake of the drums of his Majesty’s ears, some one will hint to him the necessity of inserting wool therein.

MR. ARCHIBALD FORBES, special commissioner in India of the *Daily News*, gives an amusing description of his experience of a mild attack of sunstroke. Speaking of the sun, he says: “Sometimes he sells you like a bullock, and leaves you foaming at the mouth. But this is an emphatic hint—mine was only a mild one. The sensations are not agreeable. At first they chiefly affect the mind, producing the deepest depression. As I moved towards the house, I felt as if I had robbed a church, and was to be brought up before a magistrate, who was at once a clergyman and the rich uncle from whom I had expectations. When I got indoors, my feelings were those of a man who has just been cast in damages in an action for breach of promise of marriage, in the course of which his ridiculous love letters have been read in court and printed in the morning journals. Presently I began to feel as one may imagine an ox

to feel which has been clumsily poleaxed, and is waiting for the coup de grace given by the probe poked into the spinal marrow. I almost entirely lost consciousness, and lay semi-comatose until night. But by next morning, thanks to cold water and quinine, the brain-jellied sensation had worn off, and the fever was fast abating. By the afternoon I was able to stand up, and in the evening I started for this place—a journey of about thirty miles.”

IT MAY NOT be generally known that the two semi-lanterns which are on the clock tower of the Houses of Parliament are in the hands of rivals—one employing gas, the other electricity as the source of illuminating power. The lights are exhibited to give notice to members of Parliament when the Houses are sitting; and for this purpose it is necessary that they throw their rays over a semicircle having a radius of three miles. The former, termed the Wigham light, has three burners, each composed of 108 jets, in all 324. An electro-magnetic machine, worked by steam power, produces the electric light. From a report made by Mr. Douglas, chief engineer of Trinity House, the electric light leaves its fellow a long way astern, both as regards illuminating power and cost. He states that the electric light has a superior intensity of 65 per cent. when one 108-jet burner is used, and of 27 per cent. when three are employed. As to cost, it produces a saving of 162 per cent., measured in cost per candle per hour, when one 108-jet burner is used; and of 133 per cent. when three jet burners are used. Further in its favour, its maximum powers may be doubled in intensity to meet the case of foggy nights.

FROM AHMEDNUGGER we hear that on the 16th ult., a venerable Mohammedan departed this life at the great old age of one hundred and forty-three years. He had lived a very religious life, was a priest of his caste, was never married, and is now naturally considered a saint by the Mohammedans. Smith, who has twelve children, and paid lately sixteenpence a pound for steak, says, “No wonder. If he had kept single, he dare say he could live to a hundred and forty-three, and be canonized as a saint into the bargain.”

A SAPIENT FRIEND has been talking learnedly of the way in which the softer sex

has of late been coming to the front, and, as he terms it, “usurping the rôle of the nobler being.” “Here’s the last outcome,” he says, “this whiskey war in America. A right enough notion, but it should be done by men, sir—men. There’s only one way of stopping these feminine encroachments; one and all of which, sir, emanate from the minds of disappointed maids. That way is to marry ’em—marry ’em all. Woman wants her mission, sir—there it is: let her take it and be happy!”

WHAT SHALL WE call the following? Absence of mind, or a momentary confusion of ideas? An old carpenter, employed for three months or so on a country job, returned at the expiration of that time to his old haunts, and dropped in, as he had been wont to do, at a tavern close by. A dog belonging to the landlord began to testify his pleasure at his return by leaping upon him. Chips stooped to pat the animal, exclaiming—“Why, Leo—Leo, where have you been all this while? Master, has your dog been away somewhere? I aint seen him for ever so long.” There was a pause, and then, with a puzzled air, Chips recollected himself—“Why, hang it, it’s me that’s been away, and not the dog!”

A LARGE COAL MERCHANT has written to several of his customers, who have purchased coals of him for brewing, and other purposes connected with the manufacture and sale of beer, regretting, whilst thanking them for past custom, that he is unable to serve them, as, being an abstainer and a Good Templar, he cannot conscientiously supply coals for the manufacture of the articles of such a trade. Ahem! This worthy man forgets that brewers ease their consciences by building churches.

All Contributions are attentively considered, and unaccepted MSS. are returned on receipt of stamps for postage; but the Editor cannot hold himself responsible for any accidental loss. No unaccepted MSS. will be returned until a written application has been made for them.

Contributions should be legibly written, and only on one side of each leaf.

Communications to the Editor should be addressed to the Office, 19, Tavistock-street, Covent-garden, W. C.

Terms of Subscription to ONCE A WEEK, free by post:—Weekly Numbers for Six Months, 5s. 5d.; Monthly Parts, 5s. 8d.

ONCE A WEEK

NEW SERIES.

No. 334.

May 23, 1874.

Price 2d.

JACK'S SISTER; OR, WOMANLY PAST QUESTION.

CHAPTER XXIX.

"SHE GIVES A SIDE GLANCE, AND LOOKS DOWN,
BEWARE!"



HE "one or two people," mentioned by Jack in his note had, after the fashion of dinner parties, developed into a round dozen by Thursday; so that when, rather late, Clif entered the drawing-room at the Cedars, he found it pretty full of gay dresses and black coats—the latter chiefly clerical, as, like most country towns, Marshton Fallows was not remarkable for the number of its male members of society.

The two persons, however, in whom he took most interest were at once apparent. Enid—tall and graceful in her youthful dignity, and deep mourning; her brown hair coiled simply round her head, and fastened by a pearl comb; and her full white throat and shoulders gleaming like polished marble from the soft folds of black tulle, which relieved the sombre outline of her bodice—stood near the door, bending her small head in courteous attention to the venerable Archdeacon's conversation; while Baby, a tiny sylph in white net and lace, which spread in voluminous clouds of transparency for yards about her, reclined in a low chair, her golden hair curled and

waved, partly gathered into a wreath of wild roses on the crown of her head, partly falling in a cascade of crinkly light to her waist; her cheeks flushed with the prettiest rose colour, and dimpling with the sweetest smile; her long lashes flickering now up, now down, in a manner quite bewildering to the admiring groups around her; and presenting altogether an apparition the like of which Marshton Fallows had never before seen.

Mrs. Lovejoy, indeed, who after nearly three years' matrimony still considered herself as bride and beauty par excellence, felt half inclined to cry when she saw even *her* Charlie hanging over the new enchantress's chair, and laughing in admiration at some quick little repartee which only Trevoil lips could have found so readily. The curate's wife, whose gay pink silk had been one of the articles in her trousseau, suddenly began to find that slightly worn garment faded, old-fashioned, and shabby beside the Parisian flow of Baby Delamayne's crisp white draperies, and her brow clouded piteously as she asked—"Do *you* think her so pretty?" turning her wistful eyes on the Archdeacon's son, a lad of seventeen, who stood beside her gazing at the stranger with all his eyes.

"Pretty! I should just think so. The loveliest girl out," he answered, with boyish brutality, and without taking his eyes from the golden head opposite; and Mrs. Lovejoy pouted, and made up her mind to go home early. It was very unkind of Charlie not to have got her a new dress, when that old pink was so dirty and *outré*; and she would tell him that she really would not go out any more without decent clothes to meet people with real Honiton lace on their sleeves and sashes, and masses of that dyed yellow hair hanging down their backs. Charlie was always teasing her about *her* plait; when every one knows that a plait is quite allowable if the hair on the top of your head has grown a little thin; and nobody

with half an eye could think all those heaps of yellow friz either natural or in good taste. Decidedly, if Charlie liked that sort of thing, she would hesitate no longer about getting a proper chignon from Brown's in the High-street. She could tuck up her own hair as a foundation for it; and it would be only a guinea.

Clifton's entrance made a little sensation. It generally did, as much from his good looks as from his being the member's son, and a bachelor; and Miss Leyburn made a point of receiving him with marked urbanity. But on this occasion the pain and embarrassment of meeting Enid after their last interview was visible even in his face and manner; and she, instead of showing any sympathy, merely gave him her hand without lifting her eyes, and with a cold "How do you do?" which sounded pointedly cruel in contrast to her usual cordial sweetness. The pain of loss, which had been sharpest when his eyes first fell on her face and figure, gave place to indignation at his reception, and he turned almost sharply away to answer Baby's beaming glance of recognition from the farther end of the room.

Jack, however, interfered. He was a young man brought up in the strictest rules of propriety; and would as soon have dreamt of flying as of omitting the formal introduction without which it would be impossible for his friend and betrothed to "know" one another. Wherefore Clif and Baby, instead of shaking hands, had to stand at a distance and bow with sedate gravity—both pair of eyes laughing rebelliously during the ceremony; and as Jack moved away to give his arm to the Archdeacon's wife, Baby could not resist saying, with a mischievous smile—

"Jack makes me quite ashamed of myself sometimes. Do you know, Mr. Gore, I was nearly forgetting that we needed an introduction. But I am so dreadfully neglectful of etiquette."

"Pray that you may always continue so, unless you wish to be less irresistible," laughed Clif, wondering how this mocking sprite ever came to accept sober old Jack. "I think you might in this case."

"Jack evidently didn't think so," said Baby. "I thought you were such great friends."

"So we are. It's only his way. He always was a Draco on the subject of social proprieties," Clif answered, still laughing, as Baby put in—

"Provincial proprieties, you mean," and pursed up her pretty lips into something ludicrously like Aunt Jane's. It was evident she had not taken to that lady; but a feeling of loyalty to his friends made Clif averse to join in the joke; and, as he offered his arm to the little beauty, he said—

"Don't make game of your future home, Miss Delamayne. Remember it is mine as well; and St. Leonard's is provincial as well as Marshton Fallows."

"You told me you didn't live here."

"Not in the town; but as my governor has had the honour of representing it for some years, and I was educated in its grammar school, I consider myself bound to die the death in its defence on all and every occasion."

"Very well, Sir Knight," said Baby, with a most bewitching air of saucy meekness. "I will promise not to tilt against its walls; though I had thought the laws of chivalry did not enjoin you to ~~war against women~~."

"You're right, Miss Delamayne; yet there were laws by which ~~women, even the loveliest, were bounden, in order to prevent them abusing their privileges; and injured knights had power to bring all such fair offenders before a particular court once a year, to be tried and judged accordingly.~~"

"What a funny sort of court!" cried Baby, innocently. "What was it called?"

"The Court of Love," said Clif, dropping his voice, and reddening slightly as he saw the old lady next him turn her head at the last word with a sharp glance of inquiry. Baby attributed the flush to another cause, and went on, smilingly—

"A pretty name for a cruel thing. And do you really mean to say, Sir Knight, that you would have had the heart to bring up a poor little girl like me for judgment if she offended you?"

Baby spoke in a voice so beautifully modulated, that, without any appearance of whispering, her words were only audible to the person for whom they were intended; but though Clif was well up in the same key, he answered loud, and rather drily—

"Oh, dear, no. I am not quite your knight, you know; so nothing you could do would matter to me. It is Jack who would have the right to arraign you, if you deserved it."

He was conscious, both from his habitual gallantry, and from the change in Baby's expression, that he had been almost rude;

but it was a sort of "amende honorable" for having dropped unconsciously into semi-flirtation tone a moment before; and he felt amused by the deftness with which Baby shifted her fence.

"Is it? Oh! then I am not at all afraid. I know Jack would rather defend than accuse me in any case. May I trouble you for a little water, if you please?"

Clifton complied in silence, feeling that he had received a snub; and really too much out of heart about the tall young woman with the grave face and black dress, at the other side of the table, to care much. Still, he had no earthly desire to quarrel with his pretty companion; so, when the silence had lasted a minute or so, feelings of compunction for his late curtness obliged him to rouse himself, and observe—

"I suppose Jack has shown you all there is to see in the old town, already?"

"Yes."

"The minster and the bank first, of course! And what did you think of it? Not much like St. Leonard's, is it?"

"No."

"None of the gaieties you are used to; but a jolly old place in its own way, Miss Delamayne, when you come to know it."

"Yes, I dare say."

Baby was evidently offended. She looked straight before her, and the delicate arch of her little Roman nose had a decidedly imperial air. Clifton began to feel horribly guilty, and became eagerly contrite in a moment.

"Miss Delamayne," said he, dropping his voice, and trying to look up into her averted face, "do you know, I think I was awfully rude just now. Please forgive me. It was quite unintentional, and I should be so grieved to offend you. You see that, after all, it is I who am the criminal, and have to sue for mercy. Will the queen forego her justice and grant it?"

Baby turned her face so that the severe little profile melted into soft roundness again, and answered, a little plaintively—

"The queen is not angry. It was you. I oughtn't to have said anything of Marsh-ton Fallows, of course; but I had forgotten it was your town; and in a strange place—all among strangers—one is so apt to make mistakes."

There was the least suspicion of quiver about the perfect lips; and Clifton felt as if he were some heartless brute who had

struck a little child. He would have liked to kiss the small face, and beg forgiveness again, had propriety permitted such a demonstration. As it was, he managed to express sufficient warmth of contrition to quite satisfy Baby, who returned to smiling sweetness in a moment; and made the rest of dinner so pleasant to her companion, that he felt quite aggrieved when Miss Leyburn gave the signal, and the ladies rose from table. Earlier in the day he had been dreading, beyond all words, a long, formal meal, with Enid so near and yet so far from him, and with a sad reminder of his rejection in every look, however gentle, from her grave eyes. Now it was over, and she had never glanced at him once; and for quite two-thirds of the time he had forgotten her presence and his downfall altogether.

When you have a young host, and two or three pretty girls among the guests, I have observed that men seldom linger very long over their wine. On this occasion the ladies had certainly no cause to get impatient, their male protectors appearing before the coffee cups were well emptied, or the tide of scandal well begun; and as Jack was immediately fastened on by the fussy wife of a neighbouring squire, while Enid turned to young Hamilton (who, having made a wild effort to get within the radius of Miss Delamayne's flounces and failed therein, had fled to her for consolation), Clif found himself drifting lazily to his late companion's side; and, being encouraged by a smile, swept the encroaching flounces aside with dainty care, and ensconced himself on the very chair to which little Hamilton had so vainly aspired.

"What wonderful creatures you ladies are!" he said, laughing. "You manage to take up the room of three men; and yet you are so small and white that you look as if you had dropped from the skies, like fairy queens, to rest your wings awhile, and frighten us rough men by making us feel that we have hearts to suffer as well as limbs to work."

This was a general compliment; but Baby could not but feel that it applied to none save herself in that room, and answered, dimpling saucily—

"You don't look as if you did much work; and, certainly, you are not rough; so I don't think you need be afraid of the fairies troubling you."

"That is as much as to say I am not worth their notice," Clifton put in, in a mock

aside—"an Orson whose heart is incapable of feeling their charms."

"Perhaps an Orson who is heartless, and therefore needs neither charming nor suffering."

"Worse still. I think I will go away, Miss Delamayne. You evidently mean to make this chair a stool of repentance for me."

"Not at all. But, seriously, I should not think you would ever suffer from a broken heart. You look too careless and lively."

"Perhaps," said Clif, thinking of Enid, "I am inclined to think '*Le jeu ne vaut pas la chandelle*.' Do you remember what Shakspeare says: '*Men have died, and the worms have eaten them; but not for love*'?"

"Oh, if you are going to quote Shakspeare, I am dumb. He is the prince of nasty little sayings—he and Rochefoucauld. Was it not the latter who was wicked enough to say, '*Le premier soupir de l'amour est le dernier de la sagesse*'?"

"Certainly it was. Miss Delamayne, I give you honour—I thought no ladies cared to read anything so wise as my favourite Rochefoucauld nowadays. Still, you needn't call him wicked. He does not encourage faith in human nature, certainly; but, after all, the less faith you have in anything, the less likely you are to be disappointed."

Clif spoke with an involuntary glance across the room—a weary, cynical voice, which aroused Baby's curiosity. She would have said something, perhaps, by way of satisfying it; but at this moment Jack escaped from his squires, and came over to them.

"So Clif is amusing you, little lady," he said, planting both his feet on Baby's flounces, and looking down on her with the benignant air of a huge Newfoundland dog. "I was afraid you were feeling strange, and I couldn't get away to you before. Come over and talk to Mrs. Griffiths; she wants to make your acquaintance."

"Does she?" said Baby, with a little wry face. "And which is she? Jack, you are treading on my dress."

"Beg pardon. But why do you wear such a long one? It would make two of any of the other women's gowns."

"Possibly as a counterbalance. Any one of them would make two of poor little me," and she looked up mischievously at Clifton, who could not forbear smiling in answer.

"But you haven't told me which is Mrs. Griffiths, Jack."

"That elderly lady in purple, sitting near my aunt."

"What! that dreadful old thing with the pickled cabbage face and dress to match, who snorted all through her dinner! Oh, Jack, please!" and she pressed the tips of her tiny fingers together in mock entreaty.

Jack looked equally astonished and hurt.

"I don't know what you mean," he said, bluntly. "Mrs. Griffiths is an old friend of my father's—a most estimable woman; and I considered it very kind of her to take such an interest in you. You don't."

He made a pause here, partly in incredulity at the idea, partly to hear it contradicted. Baby, however, only laughed, and answered—

"But she is so ugly, Jack."

"Ugly!" and he looked quite hurt. "However, never mind. I won't bore you to do anything you don't like."

And without more words, he walked off to open the piano for a slim lady in green.

"Jack is vexed," said Baby, looking back at Clifton with wide-open eyes.

"Yes," he said, simply.

"But how unreasonable!"

"That depends."

"On what? You don't think I was wrong, do you?"

"Pardon me. You may be vexed if I tell you."

"Oh, no, I won't, I promise you," and her sweet little face took a most bewitching expression of earnestness. "I only meant it for a joke, and she is ugly; but of course I will talk to her if I ought. Must I?"

"If I were in Jack's place, I think I should like my fiancée to care about my friends," he answered, feeling very good and magnanimous the while.

"But I do," pouting her lips reproachfully.

"Are not you Jack's greatest friend?"

He bowed, and laughed a little sadly.

"Not that I know of—only one of many. You have been very good to me, Miss Delamayne, so good that I don't know how to thank you sufficiently; but I suppose poor Mrs. Griffiths thinks that one person ought not to monopolize all the goodness and beauty in the room."

"That means I am to go," she said, standing up, and half pouting still through her smile. "But I have not been introduced to her, and I don't see Jack."

"Allow me to take his place for the moment, then. Mrs. Griffiths is a friend of my mother's, and I too ought to pay her my devoirs."

Baby put the tips of her fingers gleefully on the offered arm. She was not going to be robbed of her cavalier, after all; and resolving to please him by her docility, the little elf laid herself out to fascinate Mrs. Griffiths, with such winning grace and sweetness, that the good old lady was fairly vanquished, and Clif's eyes shone with unqualified approbation. He was, indeed, more pleased than he knew. There is a subtle flattery in the sight of a beautiful girl doing an unpleasant thing in deference to your opinion, which surpasses a host of coarser compliments; and Clif was not unsusceptible to female flattery.

Just at the end of the evening, Jack and he got together in a corner of the room.

"Well," said the former, eagerly, "what do you think of her?"

Clifton laughed.

"Think! That you're the luckiest dog alive. Why, she's lovely."

"Do you think so? She is a pretty little thing, only for her hair—"

"Her *hair*! Why, man, it's like living gold."

"Very probably. I didn't mean its colour, which is pretty enough, though I like dark best myself; but people say she oughtn't to wear it that way—that it isn't suitable to a girl going to be married."

"The deuce they do! Such an idea would never enter my head."

"No, nor mine. I don't understand those things, you know; but my aunt and Mrs. Sinclair do, and they don't approve of it. So I must just tell her to twist it up in future. We can't have *Mrs. Leyburn* criticized."

And he walked off to look after the young lady who was to bear that honoured name. Clif, left behind, screwed up his mouth into whistling shape, smothered a laugh, and then, catching sight of Enid standing by herself for a moment, crossed the room to her side.

"I am come to bid you good night," he said, feeling angry with himself because his heart would beat quicker, and his face flush up, while she looked so cold and pale.

"Good night," Enid repeated, giving him her hand for a moment. It, too, felt chilly,

even through her glove. "I hope your mother is feeling stronger."

"A little, thank you. By the way, I have not yet congratulated you on your new sister. What a perfect little fairy she is!"

"Yes, is not she?" and Enid smiled for the first time as her eyes wandered in the direction of Miss Delamayne. "You cannot tell how sweet and merry she is, or how happy we all are now she is here."

"Rather ill-natured to boast of happiness to me, whom you've made so unhappy," thought Clif, with involuntary bitterness. Aloud he only said, "Your aunt has asked me to lunch here on Saturday, and row you down to the Abbey."

"Ah, indeed! Baby will like that."

"And you—I hope *you* won't dislike it?" he said, in a mortified tone, which brought the colour into her cheek.

Yet she answered, very quietly—

"Oh, no. I enjoy boating; and it is very kind of you to come."

"Good night."

He said it almost sharply. This civil formality grated on him so keenly that he felt glad to get away. Certainly, Enid Leyburn was very graceful and dignified; but if she had a little more of Miss Delamayne's winning vivacity, it would not be amiss.

MRS. VAUGHAN'S SISTER.

IN TWO CHAPTERS.—II.

EDITH VAUGHAN did not recover from her fainting fit for many hours; and when consciousness did return, the doctor who had been called in gave strict injunctions that no agitating topic should be alluded to in her presence. Indeed, the command was hardly needed, for the poor child seemed completely crushed, and lay quite still and silent; submitting to all Mrs. Vaughan's care and petting with the mute impassiveness of a statue. And when, on the following day, Mrs. Vaughan said to her—

"Edith, dear, I am going to take you away. Do you think, if Preston packs your things, you will be able to travel to-morrow?"

She only answered—

"Yes, Beta."

And, closing her eyes, she turned her face to the wall again.

Mrs. Vaughan was, however, a woman of sufficient experience to know that sort of

thing would never do. So she held to her purpose, and carried Edith off—first to Ireland, where she had relations; and then to London, where there were a thousand and one new sights and scenes to divert the girl, and where Edith found a friend who did her more good than all the theatres, picture galleries, and concerts to which her society-loving sister dragged her. This friend was an old governess, who had loved her dearly in her childhood, and who was now the Superior of a Protestant sisterhood, who devoted themselves to nursing the sick and teaching the ignorant in the heart of London. And thus it came to pass that when Mrs. Vaughan, congratulating Edith on the improved appetite and spirits her residence in London had given her, proposed returning to St. Gurthold's again, she was met by an unexpected obstacle. She, indeed, might go; but Edith had set her heart on remaining, and becoming one of the sisters in the modest little House of Mercy over which her friend held wise and gentle sway.

"I *could* not go home again," the girl said, trembling and whitening as she spoke. "I think it would kill me. You are very good, Beta, dear, and I know you would never speak of it, or—or him; but I couldn't bear it. I am not brave or strong like you; and the memories there would—oh, Beta, let me stay! I shall be no loss to you, for I am only a care and a drag now; and here I may learn to work and be useful, even if I cannot be happy. Let me stay."

And Mrs. Vaughan let her stay. Perhaps she recognized a new element of firmness in the girl's character; perhaps Edith, having lost her spirits and gaiety, was not much of a companion; or perhaps it was the pure wish to please and comfort her. Anyway, the widow agreed, and went back to St. Gurthold's-on-Sea alone; while Edith entered on her novitiate at the sisterhood, and took her first lessons in the perfect work of living for others—not oneself.

It was a year of great events and greater trouble. The Crimean war had broken out, and already the cry waxed loud that the death-roll of our gallant soldiers was mounting to a fearful pitch for want of common care and women nurses. Cholera and fever were laying low those the sword had spared; and half our English mothers wore mourning dresses for the loss of their best beloved. Then uprose to supply this

aching want a great and noble woman—Florence Nightingale. At the head of her little band of nurses, she threw herself into the breach; and stimulated by her example others soon followed—notably among them the Lady Superior of the House of Mercy in Doughty-street, and four of her sisters.

Now, one of these four was Edith Vaughan. It had been intended to take only women of middle age and experience in sickness; but Edith pleaded so hard and pressingly to be allowed to accompany them, that at last the Superior yielded.

"There is no one to miss me at home," the girl said, in her simple way; "no one belonging to me in the world, save Beta, and she will do just as well without me. And I have such a good constitution. I never did 'take things' as a child; and I like nursing so much."

Upon all of which pleading her friends gave a reluctant assent. And so it came to pass that one of the first people who stepped on shore at Scutari from the troop-ship *Albatross* was a slightly made little girl, in a grey gown and white hood, and with eyes so blue and wistful that even rough soldiers and noisy sailors turned to give her a kindly glance, and say such as she ought not to have been brought from home.

A strange shore, indeed, for those lonely little feet to tread so bravely! A strange, bewildering scene—widely different from that old house in the quiet country town, with its lattice-windowed parlour, overlooking the flagged court, where the great walnut tree reared a pyramid of leaves into the blue sky, and boxes of scarlet geraniums glowed and twinkled in the sunshine. There was sun enough here, Heaven knows—sun enough and to spare: scorching, blinding, cloudless sun, which seemed to sear the hot white houses and blister the hot white pavements; which struck men down like bullocks in the public roadways, and raised volleys of execrations from the motley groups of English, French, and Turkish soldiers, sailors, and civilians, who were crowded together under its blinding rays. But Edith's work was not in the outer sunshine, but within the white walls of that tall, crowded hospital, just outside the town, where the sick and the dying lay moaning and praying for death, because their daily and hourly increasing numbers prevented the small band of doctors and nurses from having a chance of attending to more than

half of their patients; and she was glad to be able to escape from the sun and noise and turmoil, and begin her work of nursing.

The sight of the soldiers' uniforms and the names of the different regiments made her feel sick and sad—they brought back such a gust of the old heart-pain. She had no fear of meeting her false love; Mrs. Vaughan having said something one day about his having sold out and gone to live on his rich wife's property; but it was better to be in that sad, quiet hospital than among the many outside reminders of her past happiness. And so the girl set to work bravely, and had already won many a blessing from pain-wrung men, many a word of praise from busy surgeons, for her gentle, patient helpfulness, when one day, being called to assist in bandaging a wounded officer just brought in, she shrank back from the bed, as white as death and half fainting; for in the ghastly, unconscious man, whose mutilated arm the doctor was holding, she recognized the cause of all her sorrow and exile—Jack Walters.

"Why, nurse, you are over-tired; or what ails you?" asked Dr. Scott, a rough, good-hearted man, who objected to sisterhoods and all such nonsense on principle, but highly approved of them in practice; and reconciled his inconsistency to himself by scrupulously calling the sisters "Nurse," and pretending to discover exceptional merits in those attached to his ward. Edith was a special favourite with the old man; and seeing her apparently on the verge of fainting, he put out his hand to catch her, at the same time bidding an attendant bring the girl a glass of water.

Edith drank it off obediently. She was not going to faint, only trembling all over from the shock, and too much unnerved for speech. But the cold draught helped to restore her composure; and then, though her eyes refused to wander for one moment from the motionless form stretched out before them, she found voice to thank the doctor, and even to ask him if the sufferer was badly wounded.

"Not dangerously," he replied, examining the wounded arm the while with skilful eye and touch. "Oh, dear, no!—but nasty hurts, too. The lad has been lying in one of those wretched tents outside the camp for three days; and so, in addition to his arm (which he may thank Heaven is spared to him, though he'll never lift it again), has got a touch of fever, which we must look to.

(Take hold of the bandage, will you, and strap it tightly round here.) A brave lad, too, poor fellow! and will be missed in the regiment when—hallo! nurse, your hands are shaking again. Aren't you all right yet?"

"I thought you said the wounds were not dangerous," Edith faltered, her lips whiter than ever.

"No, not the wounds, but fever might be dangerous; and, anyhow, what could a man with his sword-arm crushed do in the regiment? Now, look here, nurse, I leave him in your charge for to-night. There is nothing to do but keep him cool, change the bandages if required, and give him a drink now and then; but I won't have you leave him for any one else, no matter who calls you; and just sit still, and keep up your heart, child—we can't afford to have you getting sick."

Now, the fact is, that though fevered, unconscious from pain, and badly wounded, Jack was not so bad as the doctor implied; but that good man, thinking his little favourite showed signs of breaking down from over-fatigue, thought fit to give her a quiet, easy post for the night; and even carried his thoughtfulness so far as to send her a screen and a folding chair from his own room, so that she might watch and rest in some sort of privacy from the constant passing and repassing before the other beds in the ward.

Edith, however, hardly heeded the kindness of her old friend. She only saw, she only noticed one thing—Jack. Poor Jack! lying there, with his bonny face all white and drawn, with a great cut on his head from which the blood oozed slowly, clotting together the brown curls which had mingled with her golden locks in their last "good-bye" kiss, little more than a year ago. Poor Jack! She had no anger against him now. Anger, indeed, it was not in her nature to feel; and she had to say over and over to herself, "Jack is married—Jack is married," as a sort of litany to keep away the consciousness of how dearly she loved him still. Dearly! aye, more dearly than she had ever done before—her brave, bright-eyed hero, wounded and suffering here, because he had preferred the path of duty and honour to ease and riches with his young wife. Looking at him now, she almost forgot, in her tender pity, that he had ever dishonoured himself by his unfaithfulness to her; and as she

bent over him, smoothing the pillows, and changing the wet rags on his hot head, she found herself putting up a simple little prayer that God would help her to save him for his young wife.

The night wore slowly on; and from moaning, tossing, and muttering in his feverish pain, Captain Walters had dropped into a quiet sleep, and Edith sat beside him, fanning the flies off his thin face; while every now and then a large tear gathering in each blue eye, fell on the clenched brown hand, which lay so helplessly on the coarse coverlet.

"Poor Jack! poor Jack!" murmured the little thing, pitifully; and just then I suppose she had forgotten her litany, for one of the tell-tale drops catching her eyes as it glittered on the soldier's wrist, she stooped and kissed it away, very quickly and gently. Now, I don't know whether there was anything in that kiss, gentle as it was, which aroused some nerve in Jack's being; but it most certainly awoke him from the peaceful sleep Edith's gentle ministrations had procured him; and when she raised her head, Jack's eyes were open, and his voice, very feeble, but the old voice still, said, wonderingly—

"Edith?"

Poor little Edith! She could have sunk into the ground, in her embarrassment at being so discovered; but she tried to forget that the eyes regarding her with such incredulous delight were those of her ex-lover—tried to forget that she herself was anything but the hospital nurse at Scutari; and answered, in soft, steady tones—

"Hush! you must not talk, or you will make yourself worse. You are very ill."

"Ill!" Jack repeated, more wonderingly still; and if ill, he yet gave satisfactory proof of his strength not being quite gone, by putting out his hand and drawing Edith, despite her reluctance, close to him—"Ill! why, I must be mad, raving mad; or—Edith, is it you? My God! it can't be fancy."

"No, no; it is Edith," the girl said, soothingly. "Don't look so troubled, Jack, or I must go away. The doctor said you were to be kept quiet."

He did not pay the least attention to her words, but lay holding her fast, and gasping for breath; but when she was silent, he said, quickly—

"Go on. Speak to me again, or I can't believe it. My brain seems whirling."

Frightened lest the fever might return, Edith knelt down, and raising his head on her arm, begged him, in her soft, cooing tones, not to excite himself. She was there to nurse him and others—only that. It was her profession now; and he must try to get well soon for the sake of—all who loved him. (She was very brave, but she could not say "for his wife's sake.")

"Are you a nun, then, Edith?" he asked, more calmly, as her dress and presence grew more realistic to him.

"No, Jack; only a nurse."

"A nurse! and out here! Child, it was not for this you gave me up?"

"Gave you up! Oh, Jack—"

So far Edith had got, when she recollected his feeble state, and said no more; but Jack heard the half-uttered protest, and felt the passionate throbbing of the heart against which his aching head rested. He was a jealous and a quick-tempered man; but pain is a wonderful subduer, and Jack had had pains of mind as well as body during the past year. He made up his mind now to know whether there was any cure for the former, or none.

"Edith," he said, "stoop your face lower. Let me look at you. It is you?"

"Don't you know me, Jack?"

"Aye, even in this place and that dress. There are none like you, little one. Oh, Edith, when you ceased to love me, why were you not frank enough to write and tell me so? Why did you let me go on writing and writing, and never send me a word of answer? Do you know that if the war had not broken out, I would have risked my commission to see you again, and end my misery of suspense? Love, did you never think what I suffered? It was cruel."

"I don't know what you mean, Jack," the girl answered, her innocent eyes wide with a wonder even he could not misinterpret. "I was never cruel, or ceased to love you—how could I?—and I wrote to you long after your letters ceased. Jack, you know I did."

"Edith, is that true?"

She only looked at him; but the mute reproach was touching in its childlike dignity. His hot fingers tried to reach hers, as he begged her pardon, and added—

"But Edith—forgive me for not understanding. I am very weak in my head just now; but I love you so dearly—you will be patient with me, will you not? If you, too,

love me still, then you are *mine* still; and why," drawing her closer to him, "do you shrink away and speak so coldly?"

"Oh, Jack!" The poor little girl had borne a great deal; but this persistent opening of her cruel heart wound was too much, and the tears rushed out fast and free as she answered—"Dear Jack, please let me go. You ought not. You have forgotten. How can I be yours still? Jack, you are ill now; but, think of your wife."

"My wife!" For one moment Jack Walters loosed his hold, staring at her as if he thought her brain was turning—"I have no wife. What wife could I have but you? Who has been lying to you? Child, child, don't cry like that."

For with the consciousness of some terrible black cloud of error suddenly melting away, Edith had quite broken down; and was kneeling at his bedside, weeping as if her heart would break.

"Darling," said Jack, feebly—for his strength was ebbing, poor fellow! and he found it hard work now to lift the face his fingers had raised so easily in the old days—"there's been some cursed treachery here, and I can't talk now; only believe this, I love you as I did the first day you were mine, as I have done ever since. You do believe me, Edith?"

She tried to answer "Yes;" but the joy in her eyes spoke first.

"Then kiss me once, little one, and I shall know you love me too."

And Edith put her fresh lips to his, and kissed him with a prompt obedience which was promising for her married life; after which Jack went to sleep so comfortably, that you see there are soothing as well as awakening kisses; and Edith began to recognize the kindness of the doctor in providing that screen. Had he done otherwise, I fear the preceding scene might have rather astonished the other nurses and patients.

Jack and Edith had not long to wait for an explanation of the cruel error which had nearly blighted their two lives; for on the following day the English mail came in, bringing Edith news of Mrs. Vaughan's death; as also a letter written to her by that lady when dying, and in which she confessed, with much penitence, that it was she who had woven the plot to part the two young lovers.

"I cared for Jack before ever I married your brother," she wrote, "and I thought he cared for me; but he was so poor, and I hated poverty, so I threw him over for Garrett Vaughan. And afterwards, when Jack came back to find me a widow, and I thought I could afford to indulge my heart and be happy, you stepped in. Edith, I could not bear it. I think a devil possessed me; for when I stopped that long letter of yours to him—telling him of what day you would be in England—I had no aim beyond giving him a temporary disappointment. It was only when his angry note came, and I saw how little it needed to make a breach, that I resolved to go on. I never thought of winning him again. I only wished to punish him for leaving me; and, in a lesser degree, you for taking him. That letter you gave me to post I burnt, and so I did the second; besides intercepting all that came from him. You were so simple, Edith, you would trust in me so implicitly, that it was mere child's play to outwit you; and if I had not really thought you might easily make a better match, I should have pitied you. But once started, I couldn't leave off; and the idea of the advertisement came to me like an inspiration. I actually saw one announcing the marriage of a Captain Waters in the 55th, part of which, if you had remembered, was also stationed at Malta; and it was only copying it for the East Dumbleshire paper, and altering a letter and figure. I thought you would easily get 'over your fancy, once suspense was at an end; and your long-suffering surprised and shocked me. Edith, I swear to you my life since has been one long remorse; and yet, though I felt you would meet him when you wrote me you were going to Scutari, and though I would not say another word to prevent you, I could not confess what I had done while I lived. I am dying now, and I ask you to forgive me—if not at once, later, when you and he are happy together. You will have nothing to wait for now; for all I have, is yours."

"Poor, poor Beta!" was all Edith said of reproval, as she folded up the letter, together with a brief note from the family surgeon at St. Gurthold's, saying that Mrs. Vaughan had just expired, after a short but painful illness; and when Jack would have added something harsher, she put her little

hand over his mouth, and said, "Oh, Jack, don't. Remember she is dead; and we are happy now. Let us try to forgive her."

Jack kissed the tyrannous fingers; but not being as gentle as his little love, would not give the desired promise, only by and by he grumbled out—

"Nothing to wait for! I suppose we must wait till my arm is healed, and my con-founded legs are strong enough to carry me to church."

And so they did; but the legs got strong wonderfully soon; for it was not three weeks from that day before people in St. Gurthold's were reading the account of a strictly private wedding in the little English chapel at Scutari, and looking forward to the return of Mrs. Vaughan's sister and her husband to the old house in the High-street.

ANGUISH IN PRINT.

IN THE STRICTEST CONFIDENCE.

TEAR THE FIFTEENTH.

SURPRISED.

IT was such a lovely night, rather dark, for the moon had sunk into a bank of vapour in the far west, while the varied scents of nature seemed sweeter than ever; but one could not help thinking how wet the gentlemen would get amongst the ivy, while I quite shivered as I thought about the great cistern being quite full with the heavy rain; while if they did not recollect this, as they had generally stood upon the lead bottom, how shocking would be the result!

Once again I fancied that I heard a slight noise; but this time it was from the leads by the back staircase window; and upon whispering to Clara, she called me a stupid, nervous thing, and I heard it no more; while directly after, the rustling we heard told who were coming.

Five minutes after there was more rustling amongst the leaves—an ejaculation in French—an expression in Italian—and a loud splash, as if a leg had fallen into the water; while directly after we could see them quite plainly, crawling along like two great Tom cats upon the edge of the lead cistern, till they were close under the window, in such dreadfully awkward positions; for the cistern had never had water in before all through the summer, on account of a little leak, and now—though, doubtless, the place

would be empty by the next day—of course they could not stand up to their waistcoats in soft water; that would have been too bad. While, as we found out afterwards, they did come off so black—oh, so terribly black!—upon us, just as if we had had visits from the sweeps.

It was poor Achille who put his leg in the tank; and every time he moved I could hear the water make such a funny noise in his boots, just as if they were half full; and, poor fellow, he was obliged to move every minute, and hold on by the window sill as he knelt there, or else he would have had to stand up, and, being so much higher than where we were, I should have had to talk to his boots. It was just as bad for the poor Signor and Clara; and I certainly should have been imprudent enough to have asked them in, if I had not known how Achille would have dripped on the stones, and so betrayed us.

I could not help thinking about what Clara had said that evening, and it really did seem so tiresome; for there we all four were, if anything more close together than ever, and really it grew quite puzzling sometimes to know who was meant when Fazzoletto whispered "Cara mia," or "Bellissima," or "Fanciullina," or "Carissima," or Achille murmured "Mon'amie," "Ma petite," or "Beaux yeux;" and I often started, and so did Clara, at such times.

But there, who could expect to enjoy the roses of love without the thorns? And yet, I don't know how it was, there seemed to be something wrong altogether that night; for I saw Clara gape twice, and I had to cover my mouth to stay more than one yawn, while I'm sure the gentlemen both wanted to go; though, of course, I could make plenty of excuses for poor Achille—he must have been so wet and uncomfortable—though I did not offer to lend him my handkerchief to wipe away some of the water.

I should think that we had been carrying on a whispered conversation for about a quarter of an hour, when all at once I exclaimed, in a deep whisper—

"Hush!—what was that?"

We all started; for as I spoke, startled by the click as of a window fastening, there was the sound of an opening sash. A light flashed out above our heads, and shone upon the skylight, the leads, and the back staircase window, when if there, quite plain, was

not a policeman standing by a figure at the window. Then there was a hurrying scramble, and the shutting of a sash; and we could hear voices, while we all stood in the shade, silent as mice, and trembling so that the gentlemen had to hold us tightly.

"Von sbirro veset de maiden," said the Signor, in a whisper.

"Oh! what shall we do?" gasped Clara.

"Taisez!" hissed Achille, who seemed to come out nobly in the great trouble—"taisez, and all shall be well; my faith, yes—it is so."

"They will us not see," whispered the Signor.

"Mais non!" ejaculated Achille. "But that police? What of him? We must wait."

"Oh, yes," I said, "pray do not move. It is one of the servants who has been discovered. I am sure that we shall be safe if we keep quite still."

But the words were no sooner out of my mouth than there was a burst of light through the half-closed shutters behind us, a buzz of voices, and Lady Blunt, the four teachers, and several of the pupils, hurried into the drawing-room; and then, seeing the partly closed shutters, stood for a moment as if afraid to come any farther.

I darted from pauvre Achille, giving him a sharp jerk at the same moment; and, as my elbow crashed through a pane of glass, and I slipped behind the great green blind in the corner, I heard an exclamation in French, and a tremendous splash, followed by a noise as of some large body snorting and floundering in the great tank; and my blood seemed to run cold, as I wanted to run out but felt chained to the spot where I was concealed.

"I have murdered him, I know!" I gasped.

At the very same moment there was a fearful scream from poor Clara, as the light of half a dozen candles shone upon her smutty face, where there was the mark of a hand all down one cheek. And, frightened as I was, yet I seemed to notice everything, as if my senses were all sharpened; and, at one and the same time, I saw my own trouble, Clara, and my poor Achille drowning in the great tank.

Poor Clara covered her face in an instant, and through the hole in the curtain through which I peeped, I could see her go down upon her knees upon the stones, quite in a

heap. Then came more horrible splashing, and my ears were all upon the stretch to catch a death shriek. But, no; there was a loud rustling of the ivy on the edge of the cistern, the sound of a body falling, and then came retreating feet along the gravel.

"Escaped," I muttered; and then a sigh came with a great gasp, as I exclaimed, "Oh! if Clara will only not betray me, I shall be safe, too."

But, oh, what a tableau was there!—night-caps, dressing gowns, flannel garments, every token of hurried half-dressing; while the light from candle after candle streamed down upon poor Clara, prone upon the white stones of the conservatory.

"Good heavens!" I heard Mrs. Blunt exclaim, "that it should have come to this!—that my establishment should be debased by the presence of such a creature. Abandoned, lost girl, what will become of you?"

Oh, how my poor teeth did chatter!

"Dreadful!" squeaked Miss Furness.

"Shocking!" echoed Miss Sloman.

"Ach ten, bad madchen," croaked the Fraulein; while Miss Murray and the pupils present sighed in concert.

"Lost one!" began Mrs. Blunt again.

Crish! crash! crash! went the glass upon the leads; the girls shrieked, and, in an agony of fear, the whole party dashed back to the drawing-room door; while, in the dim light given by a fallen candle, I saw poor Clara slowly raise her head and look towards the open window—our window.

But there was no other sound; and at last, after quite five minutes' pause, came the lady principal's voice from the drawing-room door, in awful tones—

"Miss Fitzacre, come in directly, and close the drawing-room window after you."

"For goodness' sake, don't fasten it, darling," I whispered; "and oh, Clara, pet, don't—pray, don't—betray me!"

"Hush!" whispered the poor darling, rising up like a poor, pale ghost.

And as I stood, squeezed up in the corner, trembling ever so, she closed the conservatory window, looking out as she did so; then entered the drawing-room, clattered the shutters to; and then, by the sound, I knew that they had all entered the breakfast-room, so I stole out of my hiding place, and tried the window.

At first my heart sank, for I thought it was fastened; but, no, it yielded to my touch, and as I pushed, the shutters slowly

swung open, to show me the room all in darkness. Stepping quickly in, I closed window and shutters, and then stole over to reach the door; for I could hear the buzz of voices still, and Mrs. Blunt scolding fearfully.

I crossed the room as quietly as I could, feeling my way along in the darkness—for Clara had trampled out the fallen candle—when all at once I gave myself up for lost. I had knocked over one of the wretched little drawing-room chairs; and I stood trembling and stooping down, meaning to creep under the large ottoman if I heard any one coming.

But they did not hear the noise; and, after waiting awhile, I ventured to open the door, when I could hear so plainly poor Clara sobbing bitterly in the breakfast-room; and I was filled with remorse, as I felt how that I ought to be there to take my share of the blame. But I could not—no, I could not—I must own, summon up courage enough to go in and avow my fault.

I had hardly closed the drawing-room door, when I heard a hand rattle the door of the breakfast-room, as if some one was about to open it, when I bounded along the hall to the back staircase; and but in time, for the breakfast-room door opened just as I was out of sight, and I heard Mrs. Blunt's voice, in loud tones, to the teachers, I suppose—

"Ladies, be kind enough to see that the drawing-room window is properly secured."

Up I darted to reach my own room, and it was well that I made for the back staircase; for there, regularly fringing the balustrade of the best staircase, were all the younger pupils and the servants looking down and listening; while I could hear the sounds coming up from the hall, as my Lady Blunt and the teachers began again to storm at the poor silent girl, who never, that I could hear, answered them one single word. While in the act of slipping into my room, I nearly brushed the dress of one of the pupils.

And now, if Clara would only be a martyr, I felt safe, as I stood inside our room, and listened for a few moments to the words which came up quite plainly in the still night.

"Once more, I insist upon knowing who it was," shrieked Mrs. Blunt, while her satellites added their feeble strokes.

"Tell, directly!" screamed Miss Sloman.

"Bad gell—bad gell!" croaked the Fraulein.

"You must confess," cried Miss Furness, in shrill, treble tones.

"Who was it, Miss Fitzacre?" cried Mrs. Blunt.

And then there was a stamp upon the floor, but not a word from Clara; and I dared stay for no more, but closed the door, listened to Patty snoring more loudly than ever, and then dashed to the washstand, recalling poor Clara's smutty face, and sponged my own quickly. Then I slipped on my bonnet de nuit, and undressed quicker than I ever before did in my life; while, just as I had finished, I heard them coming up the stairs—scuffling of feet and shutting of doors as the pupils hurried into their rooms, some skirmishing at a terrible rate past my door; so I slipped into bed with my head turned towards the window, and lay there with my heart beating tumultuously.

"Now, if they only did not come here first, I'm safe," I muttered.

While now I felt how fortunate it was for me that Patty slept so soundly; for not only had she not seen me enter, but if she had slept all through the disturbance, and had not heard Clara go, why should I not have done the same? And I felt that it would help to remove suspicion from me.

They seemed so long coming, and then I kept telling myself that Clara would not betray me; and I recalled with delight now that I had suffered punishment for her trick, when she moved the lady principal's chair to her fall.

"But there," I said to myself, "they shall tear me in pieces before they know anything I don't want to tell. But, oh, did poor Achille escape? and what was that fearful crash? I do hope it was the Signor, for poor Achille's sake. But how wet whoever it was must have been!"

"And you will prepare your things for leaving early in the morning, Miss Fitzacre," exclaimed Mrs. Blunt, angrily, as she opened the door of the bed-room, and the light shone in. "Now, go to bed immediately. Is Miss Bozerne here?"

"Yes, ma'am," I replied, just raising my head from the pillow.

"Oh! that is right," said her ladyship; "and Miss Smith?"

There was no answer.

"Miss Smith! where is Miss Smith?"



shrieked Lady Blunt from the door, evidently thinking that poor Patty was in the plot. "Miss Smith! Miss Smith!" she shrieked again.

"D-o-o-n't—be quiet!" muttered the sleepy-headed little thing.

"Oh! that will do," said Mrs. Blunt. "Don't wake her. Miss Bozerne, you must excuse me for locking you in during the rest of the night; but, if you object, perhaps Fraulein Liebeskinden will allow you to sleep with—"

"Oh, no, thank you, ma'am," I said, hastily; "I shall not mind."

"Good night, then, Miss Bozerne," she said, very shortly; while I felt such a hypocrite that I hardly knew what to do. "Lost girl!" she continued, as she shut the door, and turned the key, which she took away with her, leaving poor Clara standing, pale and motionless, in the centre of the room; but no sooner had the light disappeared, and shone no more in beneath the crack at the bottom of the door, than she gave one great sob—

"Oh! Laura," she exclaimed; and then, throwing herself into my arms, she cried and sobbed so wildly and hysterically, that I was quite frightened—for she was now giving vent to the pent-up feelings of the last quarter of an hour; but after awhile she calmed down, and with only a sob now and then to interrupt us—for, of course, I too could not help crying—we quietly talked the matter over.

"No; not a word," said the poor girl, in answer to a question of mine—which, of course, you can guess—"not a word; they may send me away and punish me as they like, but not a word will I ever say about it."

"Then they know nothing at all about me, or—" I stammered and stopped.

"You ought to have more confidence in me than to ask such a thing," cried Clara, passionately, as she began to sob again. "You would not have betrayed me if you had been in my position; now, would you?"

I did not know. While, being naturally nervous, I was afraid perhaps I might, if put to the test; but I did not say so.

"What could have made that horrible crashing noise?" said Clara at last; "do you think it could have been the policeman, dear?"

"Perhaps it was," I said; "but I know poor Achille went into the cistern. I pushed him in; and I'm afraid he must have been

drowned, for I'm not sure that I heard him crawl out. Oh, dear! oh, dear!" I said at last, "what a passion is this love! I feel so old, and worn; and troubled about it."

"It would be ruin to the poor Signor to be found out," murmured Clara—thinking more of her tiresome, old, brown Italian than of poor Achille. "Oh me! I know it was all my fault; but then how odd that the policeman should have had a meeting too! Or was he watching? Poor Giulio! would that I had never let him love me. I declared that I did not like him a bit to-night when we were together, and I had quite made up my mind never to meet him any more without he would talk of something else than beautiful Italy. Bother beautiful Italy! But now I half think I love him so dearly that I would dare anything for him, that I would."

Poor girl! she grew so hysterical again, that I quite grieved for her, and told her so; and then, poor thing, she crept up close to me; and really it did seem so noble of her, to take all the blame and trouble upon herself, while she was so considerate over it, that I could not help loving her very, very, very much for it all; and at last we both dropped off soundly asleep, just as the birds were beginning to twitter in the garden; and, feeling very dull and low-spirited, I was half wishing that I was a little bird myself, to sit and sing the day long, free from any trouble: no lessons to learn, no exercises to puzzle one's brain, no cross lady principal or teachers, no mamma to send me to be finished. And it was just as I was half feeling that I could soar away into the blue arch of heaven, that I went into the deep sleep wherein I was tortured by seeing those eyes again—always those eyes—peering at me; but this time out of the deep, black water of the cistern; and then I knew that I had drowned poor Achille, and that was to be my punishment—always to sit, unable to tear myself away, and be gazed at by those dreadful eyes from out of the deep, black water.

A HOLIDAY IN THE NORTH.

I.

OF the many pleasant recollections which the figures "1872" will call up before me in years to come, none will be more pleasant than the recollection of my holiday in the summer of that year. The previous

spring, a sort of vague desire which I had always had to visit Iceland took a distinct shape, on my learning with what comparative ease the desire might be fulfilled. What I had always imagined to be a long sea voyage turned out, after all, to be a matter of six or seven days at the outside; and every facility for going and returning was offered by a Danish Government steamer, carrying the Iceland mails, and calling at Granton, near Edinburgh, on its way.

At the time of learning all this, I was in a state of indecision as to where to go for my holiday that summer; but I now at once decided, if circumstances would allow of it, to be off northwards in a very short time. But that year fate was obstinate, and I was obliged to forego the much-wished-for trip. I nevertheless kept the project in mind; and early in the spring of 1872 I was already forming plans for its accomplishment.

The result of these plans was, that on the 11th of the following July I found myself, with two friends, who were also imbued with a desire to visit the island with the comfortless name, on board the Danish Royal Mail steamship *Diana*, steaming out of the Frith of Forth in a thick Scotch mist.

The vessel was not one built with a view to the comfort of passengers. In fact, she had originally been a gunboat in the Danish navy, and had undergone but little alteration when converted into a mail boat. We were not long, however, in shaking down into place; and, having arranged our traps, went on deck, in the vain hope of getting a last look at the hospitable Scotch coast, before leaving it for unknown evils. The mist had become a steady drizzle, and we could scarcely see a quarter of a mile from the ship's side. Mackintoshes were put in requisition, and grumbings were heard at such an ill-omened commencement of our holiday; but we were, nevertheless, in high spirits, and something more than a drizzle was required to damp them. As our field of observation was perforce confined to the deck and cabin of the *Diana*, we began to inspect our fellow-passengers, and, considering that we were Englishmen, made acquaintance with them in a very short time. Very pleasant fellows they were; and two of them, who were intending to return with the *Diana*, eventually joined our party in Iceland, and we only parted with them on

our return to Granton pier, feeling as though we had known them for years.

Three days of a foggy, oily, heaving sea, brought us close to the Faroe Islands, though not within sight of them; for we were enveloped in a thick fog, and were obliged to lie for sixteen hours in about forty fathoms of water.

The moment we stopped, out came hooks and lines, and everybody became absorbed in the interesting occupation of lowering two hooks and a weight at the end of two hundred and forty feet of line, and continually pulling them up again. About once in five or six times a small cod appeared on one of the hooks, when there was great rejoicing; and once, when two appeared together, and again when a large cod about three or four feet long came up, the excitement became intense, and culminated when he got off the hook, but was secured by an agile sailor with a boat-hook.

As night came on, our change of latitude became apparent, as it was not till about half-past eleven that it was dark enough to make us feel that it was getting near bedtime.

The following morning we awoke, to find ourselves lying quietly at anchor among a number of green islets, rising steeply out of a blue sea, with a clear sky and bright sun overhead. The effect was most striking. On going to bed we were lying in a thick fog, partially ignorant as to our whereabouts, and able to see nothing but a cold, grey, heaving, oily sea; on getting up, we went out into the bright sunshine of a glorious summer morning, in the midst of a number of small boats, with calm blue water stretching away to the grassy shore, and, farther on, purple headlands rising abruptly one beyond another; while close to us was a picturesque, irregular village, with grassy roofs and dark wooden walls, nestling down in a little hollow at the water's edge. The whole was a most charming picture, and has left an impression on my mind which I hope may never be effaced.

The first advantage which two of our party took of the ship being at anchor was to have a swim in the clear blue sea. But, to judge from their faces on rising to the surface after the first plunge from the accommodation ladder, they cannot have found it particularly delicious, as one wore an expression of extreme solemnity, while the face of the other was screwed up into in-

numerable wrinkles, all radiating from the centre. They both made their way as quickly as possible back to the ship's side; and, when out of the water, declared it to be "awfully jolly." To support this assertion, they were, of course, obliged to take a second plunge; but it was a very short one, and they were soon on board again, and taking vigorous towel exercise.

The next thing, of course, was to get on shore immediately; and several of the passengers tumbled into one of the ship's boats, and were rowed ashore to the little wharf below the little town of Thorshavn. We jumped eagerly on shore, and it was quite evident that some had been already quite long enough at sea to appreciate the blessings of terra firma.

Thorshavn, the capital of the Faroe Islands, and a town of some 1,000 inhabitants, is a most curious little place, composed of a number of little wooden houses, which look as though they had all been shaken out of a bag together, and allowed to remain just where they fell; so that there are no regular streets or ways, but little, narrow, winding lanes among the houses, which seem always to be leading you exactly where you do not wish to go. These lanes are all up and down hill, and very steep; and, being paved with irregular and very slippery stones, are rather dangerous places if you have nails in your boots.

The natives do not appear to find any inconvenience in these roads—partly, perhaps, from habit, and partly because, instead of boots, they wear a sort of mocassins, made of pieces of seal or other skin, folded over the foot into the shape of low slippers, and fastened with red, blue, or white woollen threads, wrapped round the leg above the ankle. As these shoes are all in one piece, and have no soles—being scarcely thicker than a pair of stockings—they afford the foot an excellent hold on the stones. Besides these shoes, the dress of the men consists of long woollen stockings, knee breeches—which, by the way, they always wear unbuttoned at the knee, producing a somewhat untidy appearance—of homespun cloth, and long coats of the same material, one button fastened close under the chin, and a long row of others apparently unused. Their costume is completed by a blue cotton nightcap, the point hanging over towards one ear.

As there is no wood on any of the islands,

the Faroese are obliged to import timber for building purposes from Norway: birch bark, too, they import; of this they make their roofs, covering the bark with sods, on which the grass grows in profusion. We saw some of them mowing this grass, but whether they count upon it as a regular hay crop, I do not know. This plan of having grass roofs to the houses has a very curious effect at a short distance, for, everything being green, many of the houses are not noticed, and the town looks very much smaller than it really is.

These grass roofs are almost universal, even among the best houses; but there are, nevertheless, one or two slate roofs in Thorshavn, and the church there forms an exception to the general rule. There is, I believe, one stone building in the Faroe Isles, and that one is an ancient unfinished church at Kirkeboe, at the south end of the island of Stromoe (the same island upon which the capital stands); for though the Faroese are by no means short of stone as a building material, they are entirely without lime as a means of making mortar. In the church at Kirkeboe the mortar used was, I believe, made with lime obtained by burning sea shells.

The islands consist chiefly of steep slopes of grass (which support a good many sheep), alternating with lines of sheer precipices; and, although at a distance the rock looks very much as if it were stratified, I believe the general opinion of geologists is that it is igneous, but has been thrown up at the bottom of the sea, and afterwards raised above the surface, in the shape of the islands we now see.

Round each of the little villages, which lie almost exclusively on the sea-shore, there is a patch of land, larger or smaller according to the size of the village, enclosed with walls much greener than the side of the hill surrounding it; and this is the only land that is cultivated, the rest being entirely wild and open, and ranged over by sheep and a few cows. The most southerly island of the group, that of Suderoe, is, I believe—we did not visit it—much more fertile than the others, and in part of it coal is found. We saw specimens of this coal, which seemed excellent; and I believe preparations are now being made to work it.

To return to our own story. On landing from the boat, we made our way through a labyrinth of narrow lanes, between the

wooden houses, which were festooned with strings of small fish, hung outside to dry—past the church, and through a little gate in the boundary wall of the cultivated land, into the open country beyond. We found ourselves upon a broad, well-made bridle road (they have no wheeled conveyances in Faroe), leading straight inland, across bog and rock, direct almost as a Roman road. At a little distance from the town, we came upon the only trees (?) in the islands. They were a few small, straggling shrubs, enclosed by a stone wall, in which was a gate, carefully fastened. Within was a gravel walk, and one or two seats. After following the road for about half a mile, we struck off to the right, and made our way up the hillside, till we stood on the shoulder of a high ridge; and here we sat down for a while, to enjoy the glorious view. At our feet lay the town and bay of Thorshavn, with the steamer at anchor, and two or three fishing smacks and a number of small boats in the shallower water. Beyond, and right opposite to us, across the blue bay, rose the curious island of Naalsøe (Needle Island, so called because at the southern extremity there is a hole through the rocks like the eye of a needle), shaped like the back of some gigantic dolphin; to the left a series of purple headlands faded away into the distance; and on our right a tremendous hill, crowned with a stony ridge, frowned at us across the valley between, where a rushing stream made its way among huge boulders to the sea, some half-mile south of Thorshavn.

For some time we sat under the blazing sun, in a state of perfect enjoyment; but at last our watches, as well as our internal organs, began to warn us that if we meant to breakfast on board, it was time to be moving; so we started at a run down the steep hillside, and made our way, floundering through bogs, and jumping from stone to stone, back to the little town; where, after some shouting, we managed to secure a boat to take us on board the *Diana*, and arriving just in time for breakfast, we did very full justice to the somewhat miscellaneous assortment of food and drink which usually represented that meal on board our little steamer.

Breakfast over, it required a good deal of persuasion to induce some of our party to make any further move, as they found it remarkably pleasant, lying on the canvas covering of the ship's boats on deck, lazily

enjoying the scene around, under the soothing influences of tobacco and a hot sun. One by one, however, the passengers disappeared from view, till at last there were but three left. Of these three the one who had been most anxious to get on shore before breakfast still held out, and stoutly declared that he had no intention of leaving his comfortable couch yet awhile. But after repeated efforts on the part of his companions, his vis inertiae was at last overcome, and about eleven o'clock we were rowed on shore, each with a hunk of bread in his pocket, as well as a large piece of Bologna sausage and a small flask of brandy, carried by one of the party.

Picking up another fellow passenger just outside the town, we started off along the bridle road before mentioned, intending to attack the hill which had frowned at us so sternly in the morning.

ONLY A YEAR.

CHAPTER XII.

"THEN YOU REFUSE ME?"

FOR some time Phillis talked about Hasson's sisters, saying what dear, good girls they were; and how much she and Kittie liked them; when she suddenly interrupted herself by the question—

"Did you know, Mr. Thyrlé, that you mentioned me a while ago in your story?"

"No," said Thyrlé, at some loss.

"Don't you remember you said that you had the less reason to suspect Hasson of treachery to you because of his engagement to a girl whose peculiar style of beauty he had often described to you? I was that girl."

"Miss Kyriel!" exclaimed Thyrlé, suddenly stopping to look in the face of the impetuous beauty, which flamed under his eyes.

"It is true. I was engaged to him when I was seventeen—more than six years ago. I loved him—even as you said you loved the beautiful Alice Graham. I never knew till to-day why or for whom he forsook me. Now I know it was for her. He spent his long vacation in Cumberland that summer, six years ago, instead of coming home as usual; because our friends thought us too young to be married, or even engaged. And soon he forgot to answer my letters—then he quite ceased to write to me. He

did not come home until two years had passed away—years of such anguish to me, that I did my best to make other men unhappy, in revenge for what he had made me suffer. It was not only that my love was thrown back on me, but my pride was trodden in the very dust. When I did see him again—well, the old love had gone—and I treated him as I did all others. My engagement to Mr. Grainger was never spoken of to me after this time, except by Gildred, who always insisted that Hasson had behaved like a blackguard; and I often had difficulty in persuading my brother to be even civil to him. I don't think my nature is so generous as yours, Mr. Thyrle: I am glad Hasson will never be able to come among us again! I might have been a better woman had I never seen or known him."

"I believe," answered Thyrle, soberly, "that our becoming better men or women is more in our own power than in that of others, or even in the force of circumstances. I have seen enough of you to know that you are not happy or contented. If you won't be angry with me for saying this—I should not fancy your system of revenge was a satisfying pursuit to one of your capacities. You will laugh at me if I attempt to preach to you, for I have as hard a temper to manage as ever man was cursed with; but, you know, none are either so bad or so good that they may not become better."

"You think me very bad, don't you?"

"I think you are very like this sort of day," he replied, as they paused a moment to look over the fresh, early spring landscape, over which cloudy shadows and bursts of sunlight were driving alternately, while the sweet west wind seemed laden with tokens of the violets in Akenhurst Wood.

"You are very capricious, I think," continued Thyrle; "but the sun shines behind and between all the shadows you choose to fling over your actions."

She smiled, rather sadly, and shook her head.

"Sometimes I fancy I might have been good, but the time for that has passed; and I can no more help being 'capricious,' you call it—a flirt is the usual term—than you could change your nature for Hasson Grainger's."

"I am not so sure," was the reply; and

quiet and short though it was, it set her heart beating, for she said to herself—

"I could be good if you would take the trouble to make me so."

The room they were shown into on arriving at Akenhurst was deserted. They had asked for Grace, but Lucy came to them, saying that Grace had been ill all day—a terrible headache—and could not come down. Suspecting the truth, Phillis said—

"Tell her, Lucy, that it is about Hasson I want to see her. You need not say Mr. Thyrle is here."

As she conjectured, on this poor Grace presently appeared—her hair a good deal dishevelled, and her eyes terribly red with crying. She was embarrassed on seeing Thyrle; but Phillis, as she kissed her, said—

"Mr. Thyrle has come on purpose to see you about Hasson; you know him, don't you?"

"Yes, she had met him at Hernsley;" and as Thyrle advanced to take her hand, with his quiet manner and smile, which Grace felt to be kind and reassuring, she regained some of her composure.

Then she related that her father had been in Knollingham the previous day, had met Lord Ashley, and had come in the train to Hallingford with him. From Lord Ashley he had heard some dreadful new story of "poor Hasson," and he arrived at home in a state of extreme agitation, and had given express commands that the name of his son was never more to be uttered in his presence.

"He has disgraced his name, my poor girls," said the old man, "and you must forget that you have a brother, as I pray God I may that I ever had a son."

"Lucy and I," added poor Grace, sobbing, "cannot imagine what terrible thing he has done. If it was any great crime it would be in the papers, wouldn't it, Mr. Thyrle?"

He thought it would be prudent to put her out of this suspense, and to tell her the truth—only suppressing his own name, and, as much as possible, glossing over Hasson's conduct.

"And do you say that for this," she asked, "he will never be admitted into society again?"

"All 'society' won't know about it, Miss Grainger; and even if the report be spread, we must hope it will soon blow over, and be forgotten."

"Who told you about it?" she asked, quickly.

"I was present yesterday, when it took place."

Grace was silent for a few minutes; then Thyrlé said—

"What I particularly wish to know, Miss Grainger (what, indeed, I came here to-day for), is, if you can give me any clue to where your brother is likely to be at present. Do you know at all to what hotel he generally goes, or what clubs he belongs to?"

Grace looked up suspiciously; but being a little disarmed by the straightforward glance she encountered, she only said—

"Why do you want to know?"

"Because," he answered, "I owe him a debt—a considerable amount—which I should like to pay, as he may be away some little time. If you had any idea of his address—"

He was interrupted by Grace suddenly taking his hand, in a rapture of gratitude, and placing in it a letter which she had received that morning, and which she begged him to read. Then she and Lucy sat watching him, as though he held their brother's fate in his hands. It was a selfish letter, Thyrlé thought—only saying that the writer, Hasson, had got into a deuce of a scrape, that he had been forced to go right off to London, "third-class, too!" and had not a shilling to bless himself with. He concluded by asking Grace to pack up his traps, and send them to the old address, in Norfolk-street, Strand, where also any letters would find him for the present. "I don't believe," he added, "that it is any good asking the governor for any money for me, but I've not often been so low before. I have not even enough to get a dinner with." That clause had very much rent the soft hearts of his sisters; and Grace explained that she and Lucy, having had a few sovereigns in their possession, had put them into his portmanteau.

Thyrlé produced a small book, and wrote out a cheque, payable at the Hallingford bank; and giving it to Grace, with strict injunctions not to mention his name to Hasson, and also to send it in small sums—a hundred or two at a time—Phillis and he came away, leaving lightened hearts behind them.

It was growing dark, and Thyrlé asked if the way by the road was much longer, and if she were tired.

No, Phillis was not tired—would like

the walk; it was about a mile longer. So by the road they went, and not very quickly, considering the evening was scarcely to be called warm now.

"Don't you think," she said, presently, "that my name—Phillis—is a very silly, stupid one? I think I ought to go about as a shepherdess, with a pink bow of ribbons on my hat, a square bodice, laced up in front, and a crook—like the little Dresden china figures."

"You might do worse," he answered, smiling.

"I was called after my great grandmother, and it was all very well, I dare say, in her days to be called Celia, and Phillis, and Chloe, but I can't say that I admire it now. I like the abbreviation far better, and I am generally called Phil at home, out of compassion."

"I like 'Phillis,'" he said, "it is like you—whimsical, uncommon; and it carries one back in the most delightful way to the days when ladies with such quaint names read Mr. Addison's paper every morning at breakfast-time; when Beatrix Esmond wore her red clocked stockings; when pretty girls—the fine ladies of those times—were carried about to evening parties in sedan chairs, played for high stakes at cards, and drank dishes of tea."

Phillis laughed—her heart was very light. Did he not trust her? Had she not to-day won his confidence?

"Do you mind telling me," he said, "as a great secret, what colour or colours you will wear to-morrow night?"

"Why do you want to know?" asked Phillis, with a good deal of curiosity.

"Because I have ordered a bouquet for you from Covent Garden, and I think I might stand a better chance of seeing it worn if I telegraphed what flowers or colours you would like it composed of."

Phillis, who was sure to have two or three bouquets sent her on the coming occasion, coloured with pleasure to hear that she would have one from him. He had brought many trifling gifts—flowers, plants, books, and pictures—to her mother and sister; but never a thing for herself.

"It is no matter," she said; "my dress is white, and I have not fixed on any flowers—I can wear anything to match my bouquet."

Thyrlé glanced at her keenly. Was not that a true tone? Nay, she was only draw-

ing him on—it was her nature, and she “could no more help her nature”—had she not said so herself? He saw the transient colour on her cheek, and thought her face too queenly, too noble, to lend itself to such a system of deception as she had trained it to.

“Miss Kyriel, you should wear diamonds,” he said.

“So I would, if I were able. I had thought of it, but I have only a tiara and earrings; and I can’t wear other jewels on my neck, or very well go without any.”

“I wonder,” he began, speaking anxiously, and with some trepidation, “if you would wear a thing I have? It is some kind of a collarette or necklace—made of good enough diamonds, I believe. It was given to me in India by a very rich native, in token of his gratitude for some slight service I had done him; and of course it has never been of any use to me. But I believe I could find it if—if you would care to give me great pleasure by accepting it.”

Phillis was overcome by a very novel sense of complete confusion. What was she to do? If she declined so tempting an offer, he might be offended; if she accepted—nay, how could she accept such a thing from a man who had never before displayed any preference for her, or shown her any attention beyond ordinary civilities? As he waited for her to speak, she forced herself to say—

“I don’t know what my mother would say, Mr. Thyrlle, to my appearing in borrowed finery.”

“It would not be borrowed,” was the decided reply.

“Mr. Thyrlle,” she said, with a greater effort even than before, “I am very much obliged to you; but, you know, it might be thought odd if I wore jewels which you had given me. You must let me refuse; but I hope you won’t think me ungrateful.”

“I don’t see that you need give out where they came from,” he persisted.

Something in her tone and looks had encouraged him.

“Suppose I am questioned?”

“Will it not be enough to say that they came from India?”

“Hardly, I think. You know, a diamond necklace is a very different sort of thing to a handful of flowers.”

Thyrlle did not answer. A conflict was going on within him between passion and

his reason. He felt so sure inwardly that she was but amusing herself at his expense (he had so low an opinion of his own merits), and he thought of the men, with far higher pretensions and larger fortunes than he had, whom he knew she had refused. Yet, had she blushes at her command? Could she soften her eyes at pleasure? Or could it be true that those dark, sweet eyes melted and fell, that her colour rose and varied under *his* glance?

“I must be dreaming, or mad, or drunk,” he thought; but he contrived to speak steadily enough, and very much to the point.

“Then you refuse me?” he said, and the significant words startled her.

“I am afraid you are angry with me,” she replied. “I don’t know what to do.”

He paused again, then said—

“Do you know, Miss Kyriel, I have often thought you have been offended with me? Sometimes—”

“Oh, sometimes I am out of temper, Mr. Thyrlle—you must not judge of me by such unfavourable periods.”

“Then I was right in thinking that you have been vexed to see me?”

“No, never!”

And her tone expressed wonder and regret.

“Would it be a matter of any interest to you—don’t think me very conceited—if I postponed my visit to Russia? I meant to have gone in the first week in April.”

Miss Kyriel’s heart began to beat strangely fast and thickly.

“I shall be very glad if you stay,” she murmured.

“Are you sure?” he exclaimed, looking earnestly into those dangerous eyes of hers, and forgetting how many had wrecked their happiness by so doing. “Are you speaking truly? You don’t know what your words are to me! Phillis!” he caught her hand eagerly—“Phillis, am I too presumptuous? Tell me at once if there is no hope for me—anything is better than suspense.”

But suspense he was doomed to bear; for having arrived just then at the corner where the Hallingford-road joined the one they were on, they suddenly encountered Mr. Brooke driving Kittie back from Hensley. They were very near the Manor House, too, so Mr. Brooke considerably made the ponies walk; and Thyrlle, having dropped Miss Kyriel’s hand, and crossed to the other side of the way from her, in a somewhat

guilty and embarrassed fashion, entered into an interesting discussion with Mr. Brooke upon the state of the roads—not knowing whether he was saying they were hard or soft, and anathematizing him heartily in his mind.

Phillis—her usually pale face lighted up by a considerably heightened colour—explained that they had been over to call at Akenhurst, and asked Kittie a number of questions about the luncheon party; giving Thyrlé no opportunity to speak another word to her, for she fled upstairs the moment they reached the house, in spite of his reproachful eyes.

Mrs. Kyriel was in the drawing-room, and delighted, as she always was, to see Thyrlé. She insisted on his staying to dine as usual, although—also as usual—he entered his feeble protest about his dress, and was not unwilling to be overruled.

Perhaps Phillis, so long accustomed to torment men, could not at once relinquish her dear delight; for she led poor Thyrlé such a life that evening as made him frequently more than half repent his hastily spoken words.

In the first place, she made Mr. Brooke take her in to dinner, saying—

“He must be tired of you, Kittie, by this time, and I shall take pity on him. I am sure Mr. Thyrlé is tired of me.”

But Mr. Brooke, somehow, did not feel so gratified by this as he might have a few weeks previously. Nobody can be sentimental at a dinner table; but Thyrlé was, for him decidedly moody. He was puzzled to find out if Miss Kyriel's flow of spirits proceeded from glee in having trapped him so easily, or real, heartfelt gladness; and he was disconcerted and troubled in his mind. In the drawing-room she ordered him off “to poor mamma—she will think you are deserting her;” but her glance, as he obeyed her, left him in doubt if she wished him to go or to stay. Mr. Brooke would bring her her tea, she said; and Mr. Brooke would turn the leaves of her music—he was accustomed to do it; and Thyrlé, each time, retreated back to Mrs. Kyriel in a most unenviable state of mind, and that lady thought him strangely uninteresting and pre-occupied.

But Phillis gave him a most unlooked-for reward at last. When he rose to go, and had said good night, she exclaimed—

“You may stay here, Mr. Brooke. I am

going to play host to-night, and find Mr. Thyrlé a cigar.”

And, accordingly, she went out into the hall with him, shutting the drawing-room door; and, as her freaks were unnumbered, no surprise was evinced. No one was in the hall. Phillis found Mr. Brooke's cigar case, and with fingers which rather trembled in spite of herself, drew out a cigar, and presented it to Thyrlé with a demure little air, and the prettiest blush in the world.

He took the hand in his, disregarding the cigar. He was more agitated than she was: so much depended on her next few words.

“Phillis, don't trifle with me if you can help it. Don't you know how much I am in earnest?”

“Well, Mr. Thyrlé?”

“Will you be my wife, Phillis?”

She did not reply, but she let him draw her to him; and she hid her face in his breast with a marvellous sense of rest and contentment.

“Then,” he whispered, smiling a little, “I may bring you the necklace to-morrow?”

“No—send it. Don't come, please. People talk so.”

His brow clouded, but—

“As you choose,” he replied.

“You are vexed with me already?” and she glanced up.

What a lovely, provoking, bewitching face! Thyrlé bent down to kiss it, thinking that his due about then; but, half shy, half coquettish, she turned away, and slipped from him.

“Well, good night,” he said, pocketing this deprivation with quiet fortitude, which perhaps did not altogether please the beauty, and holding out his hand.

“Good night,” she said. “But I forgot. You must be at Hemsley punctually, remember. It is very unfashionable to go there late, because Sir George always opens the ball with a country dance, and it is such a pretty sight.”

“I don't particularly care for the sight,” returned Thyrlé; “but is it possible you will make it worth my while to go early?”

“I always dance it with Lord Ashley—if that is what you mean?”

“Then I shall forego the pretty sight, and arrive in time for the first waltz.” Then, in a different tone, he added—“Couldn't you throw Lord Ashley over for this once?”

“People will say—” began Phillis, hesitatingly.

"Hang 'people,' and what they will say!" observed Thyrle, without ceremony. "The question is—Do you like me better than Lord Ashley?"

"Yes—of course, I do. Well, as you like—"

"Thanks; all right, then. You may be sure I shall be early. Good night again, Phillis."

And she went back with a light heart into the drawing-room.

TABLE TALK.

GOVERNMENT has just announced the total probable cost of the Tichborne prosecution at £55,315 17s. 1d. We want a Mr. Mantalini to express what should be done with the odd penny.

HAVE THE DIRECTORS of the Crystal Palace some strange political bias, and have the late and present secretaries been guilty of some unlearned offence which must for ever exclude them from the warmth of the smiles of Royalty? These questions arise in connection with royal progresses, and the honours that, mushroom-like, spring up in their wake. For instance, a visit to the City has again and again produced baronets and knights. Men who have been guilty of no other offence than being successful in trade have been elected Lord Mayors and sheriffs, and royal favours have followed in their wake. But our Crystal Palace friends fête Shahs, and Czars, and great guns foreign without end, welcome the reigning family scions in the most loyal fashion, and— Well, there it ends. We have known worse men knighted than George Grove.

A FRIEND WHO has an intense love of English fashions, and a thorough dislike of what he calls "your French fal-lal morality," was the other night a spectator of the French play "Le Sphinx." Coming out to the refreshment buffet, and making a noise with his lips as if he had a nasty taste in his mouth, he exclaimed, "Hang your Sphinx! Give me the Pyramid." His hand at the time was upon a bottle of Bass, and the index finger pointed by accident to the red triangle.

IT IS ONLY reasonable to expect that police-constable Kerrison, who captured the

burglar at Kingston, and who is described in the report as very pale and not yet recovered from his wounds, will not be so foolish as to risk his life and be shot at again; for he has been summoned to Bow-street, "to be publicly rewarded for the courage and determination he displayed." After being told that the reward he was to receive was a much higher one than it was usual to give to policemen, he was presented with a cheque for ten pounds. P.C. Kerrison is only 28 V Reserve, so he must be content with his ten pounds. Had he been an officer in the army, and showed a tithe of the bravery, he would— Bah! what can a policeman expect?

A CORRESPONDENT writes:—"I have lately been informed of how the perforation of postage and receipt stamps came into force. It would appear that a person who was commonly known about London by the name of 'Fire' Fowler—simply from his doing the fires for the London papers—wanted to tear a piece of paper into some particular shape. He had no knife or scissors, so he hit upon the plan of perforating the paper in numberless holes with a pin, thus enabling him to dis sever the paper. Some one seeing the process at once seized the idea, and to this we are indebted for this clever invention."

THAT A LOVE of cleanliness is sometimes the ruling passion in the feminine heart was never more strongly exemplified than when a poor fellow in our town met with a serious accident, which necessitated his being carried home by some of the bystanders. The tidings of his condition having been gently broken to his wife, she met the sad procession at her door, and with clasped hands and streaming eyes bewailed herself after this fashion—"Oh, my poor old man!—oh, my poor old man! Will he ever get over it? Can't ye bring him in the back way, instead of over my clean doorstep?"

All Contributions are attentively considered, and unaccepted MSS. are returned on receipt of stamps for postage; but the Editor cannot hold himself responsible for any accidental loss. No unaccepted MSS. will be returned until a written application has been made for them.

Terms of Subscription to ONCE A WEEK, free by post:—Weekly Numbers for Six Months, 5s. 5d.; Monthly Parts, 5s. 8d.

ONCE A WEEK

NEW SERIES.

No. 335.

May 30, 1874.

Price 2d.

JACK'S SISTER; OR, WOMANLY PAST QUESTION.

CHAPTER XXX.

BABY VISITS THE POOR.



HERE is Baby this morning?"

"Gone for a walk, auntie."

"For a walk—by herself?"

"Yes. I had one of my dreadful headaches." And Enid turned up a very white petal face

from the sofa in a dark corner. "If I even move, it seems to jar on all the nerves."

"And Miss Delamayne could not stay at home one morning to keep you company!" (Baby was no favourite with Aunt Jane, whose affections were like her mind—rather narrow.) "I must say I think it very selfish, when you are always so kind and attentive to her."

"My dear auntie!" cried Enid, raising her aching head in the eagerness to remonstrate, "how can you think such things? and of that dear, little, loving Baby! Why, she was as sorry for me as ever she could be, and would have stayed in this dark room all day; only, as she said, she knew there was nothing like perfect quiet for a headache like mine, and so she is doing my work instead—actually going all the way to Grilstone's Lock to take a bottle of wine

to that poor woman who had twins on Friday last. Was it not sweet of her? For it is so stupid for a little girl used to companions to walk about by herself. I am growing very fond of Baby, auntie."

"So I see, my dear," remarked the aunt, drily. "I only hope—"

"Now, don't, auntie—please, don't! You know you are not cynical really, and I don't like the pretence. As if you could help liking Baby. Why, she is a very sunbeam in the house."

"She is very lively, certainly."

"Indeed she is, and such infectious liveliness. Did you ever hear Jack laugh as often as now? And he had been getting to wear quite a solemn and business face, dear old fellow."

"He has a great deal of care on his shoulders just now, Enid. Mr. Harding's absence comes very unfortunately at this particular time; for it leaves the whole working of the bank on Jack's shoulders. By the way, I do like one thing in Baby Delamayne—she does not try to beguile Jack away from the bank in work hours, as I was afraid she would."

"Ah, then, after all, you sceptical old lady, you are obliged to own that she surpasses your expectations in one thing. Wait a little, and I shall be quite second fiddle."

"That would be a long waiting, Enid."

"Perhaps it would. I know you are terribly partial; and, as you and I are to live together in that pretty, vine-covered cottage after Jack's marriage, it would not do for you to be hankering after a different companion—at any rate, till Merle came for me. No, but seriously, that instance you mention of Baby's delicacy is only one of many. I never met a young girl with such perfect tact. Directly I gave her a hint of the importance of Jack's not neglecting the bank just now, she grasped at it, and declared, in her pretty, vivacious way, that she would be the first to bully him if he

showed any symptoms of idleness. And then, yesterday, when Clifton was here, talking to me—oh! I did so love her—I only gave her a look, and she came up to us at once, and entered into the conversation so sweetly and readily, that I was able to slip away without seeming rude or abrupt."

"No one but you, Enid, would see any great sweetness in talking to a handsome, agreeable young man like Clifton Gore," observed Miss Leyburn—a little bitterness in her tone, a little impatient sigh as she finished.

Enid understood both signs, and coloured deeply, though her answer was merely to the words as they stood.

"Nor should I, auntie, only that she has seen such numbers of men in society, that Clifton does not seem such a hero to her as to us quiet, out-of-the-way people; and besides, Jack had just come into the room, and she must have been wanting to talk to him. Fortunately, he had a letter to answer; and Clif went away when it was done, and set Baby free."

"Do you think you are wise in not telling Jack, Enid? It would have spared you a great deal of awkwardness and annoyance; for I am sure he would not have urged Clifton to be here so much at present, and to go with you in the excursions Baby is for ever getting up."

"But it would have pained him so much, auntie, and deprived him of the pleasure of having his friend during the short time that Clif is here; and when his society makes such a pleasant change for Baby in our quiet life. Besides, I never think it honourable or delicate to repeat such things when it can possibly be helped. I had to tell you, that you might understand why I, personally, did not care to be thrown tête-à-tête with him at present, and while our meeting can only be painful to both of us; but that was all, and I knew it was safe with you. I hope he will soon forget this folly altogether."

"Folly!" groaned Miss Leyburn, catching at the word. "I know where has been the folly. Dear, dear! and to think you might have been Lady Gore! It almost makes me hate that—"

"Dear auntie, please!" Enid broke in, imploringly.

"Oh, you needn't be afraid, my dear. I know your infatuation on that subject; and I have ceased to try to interfere with it. By

the way, have you heard from him lately, and has he got that tutorship?"

"Yes, I heard this morning." (A close observer might have detected a slight change in the quiet voice—might, had the room been lighter, have seen an additional pallor on the pale cheek.) "He has not got it. Young Lord Troubridge seems rather bump-tious; and Merle did not think travelling with him in that position would be pleasant."

"Pleasant! and it was such a capital opening. I have no patience with that boy. Does he expect life to be all rose leaves, and ironed ones into the bargain? Take my word on it, he will not get one at all."

"Perhaps not," Enid answered, calmly. "Should a good curacy offer, it would be hardly worth while to take a tutorship for such a little time; and, besides, he is rather in doubt whether to take one in any case. He thinks it might not be advisable for my dignity—not that I care the least about such things; but he says other people might think it derogatory."

"Derogatory—fiddlesticks!"

"Come, auntie, you're not going to be hard on him for thinking too highly of your niece."

"I don't want to talk about him, my dear—a poetry scribbling—"

"My dear aunt, I don't believe he has written a line of poetry since his first year at Oxford. All young men rush into rhyme at that period. It is just like a Seidlitz powder—carries off the overplus of sentiment they would otherwise bring into everyday life with them. Lady Gore told me her son had written albums full."

"I told you, Enid, I didn't want to talk on the subject. If you argued for hours, I should not fall in love with your phoenix. What *does* he write, then?"

"Terribly learned articles for learned journals—metaphysical essays—things far above the grasp of your intellect or mine, auntie."

An answer which, to speak slang, "floored" Aunt Jane. She sniffed incredulity, and departed silent, but depreciating to the last. Enid drew out a folded letter from under the sofa cushion, and tried to read parts of it over again by the dim light. They puzzled and distressed her more than any one could have guessed from her manner. Merle was evidently being very gay, very much made of and sought after; yet not happy or contented; and the

reasons thereof she could not make out. A peevish complaint of her coldness was contradicted by an impetuous declaration that she was too good to him; and an impatient longing to have her with him, corrected by a half-hint that he sometimes doubted whether he would enter the church after all. There were better things for a man than to go into a pulpit without clerical interest; and it would only entail a little longer waiting. Enid felt that he was growing beyond her understanding. She put the letter back again, with a little murmured prayer for his happiness, wherever he might be; and turned her thoughts on Baby instead.

Dear Baby! there were no clouds about that bright sunbeam; and Enid lay pondering whether Aunt Jane would be vexed if she were to make over her best amethyst necklace to the new sister. Baby had admired it so much, had tried it on, and laughed delightedly as the liquid purple gems sparkled round her snowy throat. Enid longed to clasp it on again, and tell her that it was hers. What did she want with it? A piece of black velvet or her gold chain did well enough for her, and even Merle must agree that it looked better on that little waxen neck. What a pity he could not be here now, poor fellow! to enjoy Baby's visit with the rest. There would be no need then for Clif to come so often; and a low, long sigh told of the sternly repressed but never conquered pain which these frequent visits entailed on the young hostess.

Baby, meanwhile, radiant in the freshest of pink cottons and the shadiest of straw hats, with a wreath of pink geraniums round the crown, a dainty little lace frill round her throat, a broad, rosy sash knotted about her slender waist, and a pretty wicker basket hanging on her arm, was tripping along a shady path, which, bordered by the river on one side and Lord Amberley's woods on the other, lay in the direction of Grilstone's Lock. The day was hot, a perfect flood of pure amber sunshine streaming through the outer network of emerald-broidered boughs, and lying in a sheet of dazzling gold upon the calm, crystal water. Behind, the green, dark depths of the woods, with their winding, dusky paths and impenetrable blackberry thickets, looked unspeakably cool and refreshing to the eye after the contrast with those sun-bathed meadows

dappled with sleepy kine, and dotted here and there with trees, on the opposite shore. And Baby walked very slowly, and cast frequent and anxious glances along the sinuous curves of the bank she was following. Probably she was getting tired, and sought a view of the destined lock cottage to which Enid's wine was going. But if so, each glance met with disappointment; and if so, why did her cheeks dimple up, and her eyes sparkle with new fire, as she suddenly came in sight of a young man, straw-hatted also, and clad in cloudy grey, who was seated on the root of an overhanging willow, with his head thrown back against the bank, a book in his hand, and a fishing-rod between his knees. Apparently he was dozing; for her quick, springy footsteps, the only sound audible in the drowsy, noonday stillness, failed to catch his attention till she coughed in passing, and then he tilted back the straw hat, and looked round with a half startled, half lazy curiosity. Baby uttered an exclamation.

"Mr. Gore, is it you? What an industrious angler!" And she burst into a little ringing laugh, like a peal of fairy bells. "Do you know, I was just wondering who the sleepy individual might be."

"Angling is a waste of human ingenuity on a day like this," he answered, springing to his feet, and tossing his hat on to the grass as he came towards her. "Not the ghost of a fish will rise; and no wonder, when there isn't a half-inch of cloud in the sky, or a half-inch of shade in the water; but may one ask what gives me the pleasure of seeing Miss Delamayne, like a wandering princess in a fairy tale, so far from home?"

"The wandering princess always fell in with an ogre in the forest, Mr. Gore. Are you he?"

"I hope not; or, if so, the princess has charms too potent for my ogreish powers to break through. But I don't think you are a princess, after all. They used not to wear pretty little hats with flowers in them, and carry baskets on their arms. If you had a red cloak as well, I should say you were Red Riding Hood, carrying cakes and honey to your grandmother's cottage."

"Worse still, for in that case you would clearly be the wolf; and, to speak the honest truth, I don't think you look the character at all well."

"Don't I? And yet, do you know, Miss Delamayne, I could imagine some wicked

person being wolfish enough to pounce on you and carry you off. You look—*eatable!*”

And he laughed, as his eyes took in leisure view the tiny, rounded figure and rosebud face. She laughed, too—blushed a little as well—a soft, bright blush, like an oleander blossom; but answered as lightly—

“Well, Mr. Wolf—if wolf you are—I hope you will spare me this once, and direct me on my way; for I am not at all sure I am in the right gait.”

“For where?—the grandmother’s cottage?”

“No, for Mrs. Parkington’s—a woman who lives close to Grilstone’s Lock, and washes for Enid in general. Just at present, having presented her husband with two boy babies in one afternoon, she is not able to do the washing, and Enid is sending her a bottle of wine by way of consolation.”

“Vicarious charity!” said Clifton. “Well, among your various types, I should never have thought of pitching on Dorcas for the right one.”

“I don’t think it is the right one—at least, my arm says not.”

And she pushed back the sleeve, showing a deep red mark on the soft, downy white flesh. Clif felt an insane desire to kiss the injured member. I wonder if Baby guessed as much.

“Poor little arm!” he said, eyeing it with a lingering, pitiful tenderness, which even brought an extra throb to that young lady’s shred of a heart. “Poor little white arm, and tired feet! They shall not carry that vile basket any more. Grilstone’s Lock! Why, it’s half a mile off yet; and you have come the very longest way to it, if you have followed the river all the way.”

Baby nodded her head dolefully.

“You ought to have gone along the north side of the wood, and turned down at the Hall farm. It would have saved you twenty minutes each way. Did not En— any one tell you?”

“No—I don’t know. They said the edge of the wood.” (Enid had given a minute description of the route; but as Clif had mentioned, on the previous day, that he was going to fish the Amberley Wood water, that might have accounted for Baby’s feet having wandered from the right path.) “How stupid of me!” she went on, plaintively—“a whole mile farther? Oh, dear, and I am so tired.”

“Stay and rest yourself, then,” said Clif,

taking the basket and the command into his own hands. “Not here, it is getting hot enough to grill the brains in your head. Yes, even under all that golden glory, Miss Delamayne. You would be getting a sunstroke, and I should have to carry you home on a shutter. No, no; come a little this way,” and he turned off the path, among the trees. “I know a most delicious, shady hollow, to which, if I had not been too lazy, I should have crawled half an hour ago; and where you can leave some of your fatigue before you go any farther.”

He led the way as he spoke, holding back the branches for Baby to pass; and stopping every moment to set free a golden curl or wandering ribbon from some curious briar, until they had passed through a tangled copse of young trees, and found themselves in a deep, ferny hollow. No sun came there; for giant oaks and beeches stood around, wrapped in ivy and bedded in bracken, and made a green bower, through which the light filtered in an emerald rain. Tall foxgloves, masses of wild bluebells, pale, tender-veined orchids, and straggling pink geraniums covered the ground everywhere; and made bright patches of colour in the deep, green, feathery carpet of grass and fern. Around and about, on three sides, were nothing but huge moss-grown trunks and dark, tangled recesses of brake and copse. On the fourth was the belt of young trees which extended to the path, and through whose lighter foliage the sunbeams played in a golden glitter, like some enchanted palace for the fairy people to disport themselves within.

Baby dropped upon a mossy root—a fairer flower, a brighter spot of colour, in her fresh, exquisite beauty, than all around her. Clif cast himself down in the fern at a little distance, his chin on his folded arms; and his blue, dreamy eyes taking in the beauty of face and scene with hungry satisfaction.

“Well,” he said at last, moving his lips, but not his gaze. “What do you think of my nest? Is it pretty, eh?”

“Pretty!” she echoed. “It looks too pretty to last. It is perfect.”

“Don’t talk about lasting. Nothing lasts; not even beauty. But you are right. It is perfect now; only you should be in my place to see what makes it so. How could I ever have thought it was before?”

She looked down at him, with a shy, inquiring smile, half conscious, half innocent,

which made his pulses thrill; but said nothing. A thrush was singing in the wood hard by. The river rippled lazily in the distance. Even their own voices, when they spoke, sounded like stray notes of music melting into one another, and sinking in silence more melodious still. Clif felt his senses beginning to reel beneath the subtle sweetness of the scene—beneath the subtle fascination of a woman lovely as an angel and clever as Satan.

Springing to his feet with a sudden, vigorous effort, he drew out his pocket-book, and said, abruptly—

"Keep still. I shall never see this hour again. The picture is not even mine to hide from other eyes. Let me make a sketch of it, at least."

"Of me?" she said, turning her liquid, laughing eyes full on him. "But how am I to look—so?"

Their eyes met. Clif dropped his book again, and turned sharply away.

"No, never mind. I can't draw. I was a fool. Are you rested, Miss Delamayne?"

"Yes, nearly; if you like."

"I don't like," he answered, forgetting himself in the heat of the moment. "I would like you to sit there for ever, so I might stand and look at you. Let me read to you instead. May I?"

"Of course, you may," she said, smiling at his imploring tone. "But have you a book?"

"Yes, one I had been reading before you came up. Do you know this?"

And flinging himself down again on his grassy couch, he went full tilt into that most exquisite poem, the first of Joaquin Miller's "Songs of the Sierras," verses scorched with the sun of the South, and breathing of a passionate, sorrowful strength which might have stirred even colder blood than that of Baby Delamayne, without the charm of Clif's full, sweet rendering to give them merit. Her lovely, listening face led him on in almost equal delight to the end; and then she drew a long breath, before exclaiming—

"That was beautiful! No, I never heard it before; and I did not think any one could read as you do. Will you lend me the book, Mr. Gore?"

"No," he answered, with a smile which took away all the abruptness from the negative; and thanked her for the compliment as well. "Because, though some of these are

beautiful, as you say, you would not like others at all; and, what is more, they would not like you."

She blushed up brightly—"celestial red, love's proper colour, glowed within her face"—but answered, very prettily—

"Then you must read us—Enid and me—the best bits some other day. Will you not? It will be such a treat."

She had dropped in Enid's name in affected bashfulness. It acted otherwise than she had intended, however; for Clifton thrust the book into his pocket, and rose, frowning slightly—

"Ask Jack. He will do it better, and with the right expression—con amore."

"Will he?" said Baby, with a simplicity which might be taken for sarcasm or not, as desired. "I never heard Jack read poetry. Somehow, I did not fancy that he could."

"Not even with you beside him?" Clifton asked, smiling.

She shook her head.

"I? I have no influence over Jack. I am too childish, too silly. He would like me better all bound in prose"—and she laughed a little sadly. "Enid is that, you know. She is good—good as gold, and strong as iron. I am just a little foolish butterfly—good for nothing but to fly about in the sunshine, and be crushed if some one puts his big heel on me."

There was a quiver of new-born passion in her voice, a gathering moisture in the large blue eyes, which would have wrecked a better and a stronger man. Clifton came to her side, his face flushed and eager; but the flush died before he spoke, and the words, by strong constraint, were not the ones he meant to say.

"I wish Jack were here instead of me, to contradict you. What would he say if he heard you talking such nonsense—you who are the crown of his life?"

"I don't know," she said, looking up into his dazzled eyes, with the same pitiful little smile. "But I am glad he is not here. It frightens me when he is cross; and Jack does not like nonsense—he often tells me so."

"He likes *you*, I suppose?" Clif cried, half fiercely.

"Oh, yes—he likes me," she said, dropping her eyes, with a little sigh.

There was a moment's silence. Baby looked up with a start.

"Mr. Gore, I must be going. I have

been here too long. I shall get into disgrace if I am late. Good-bye; and thank you so much."

"Thank me!" he repeated. "What for? But you are not going to send me away, Miss Delamayne? Let me pilot you as far as your destination, and see you safely home?"

"If you are not too tired—if you really like it."

It was late when Baby returned from her charitable expedition that afternoon; and great was the compassion lavished on the little maiden for having undertaken so long and lonely a pilgrimage. Lost her way, too, poor child! It was too bad. Baby only laughed, and put her soft arm round Enid's neck. She did not mind a long walk, and she liked being of use so much. Fortunately, she had met Mr. Gore, who kindly set her in the right way; and, oh, he had said he would call, and bring them some new songs on the morrow. She did not enter into any further particulars of the walk. Perhaps she thought they might not be of interest to the general public; besides, every one knows that chatter is very bad for a sick headache; and Baby was so pitiful over that ailment, and so sweet and caressing to the sufferer, that even Aunt Jane owned that she was a winning, loveable little thing; and Enid felt inclined to worship her new sister.

That evening the amethyst necklace changed owners; and Baby, who had an appreciative eye for jewellery, locked it up very contentedly in her own dressing case.

HOUSE AND HOME.

IT is my belief that our free and glorious institutions have arisen out of the strong British yearning for a house, a house which a man can call his own—truthfully I mean, of course; for fictitious appropriation is easy, common, but unsatisfactory. A mere acquaintance, for example, named Prodggers, addressed me not half an hour ago as "My boy;" but I am not Prodggers's boy at all. Similarly people say "Come to my house," when they are houseless. They ought to say, "Come to Smith's house, where I am lodging."

Possessed, actually or in theory, of a house, the Briton's next step has always been and is to fancy it his castle. By that he means a small enclosure, within which he

is a despot, and where he is almost unsailable from without.

Here he can rule his wife—if she lets him; correct his children—if they let him; order what he likes for dinner, and have it—if the cook lets him. Into this imaginary fortress duns cannot enter; bailiffs may be kept out by force; even the powerful policeman may be defied, unless armed with a warrant.

This glorious ideal has rarely been attained, but the continual striving after it has perpetually enlarged the circle of our liberties, just as the search for the philosopher's stone has led to chemical disclosures.

By the by, can a policeman enter your house without a warrant? I have a vague idea that it would be exceeding his duty to do so; but, on reflection, I think that the notion may be based upon one isolated case. A friend, who is usually as abstemious as a monk, was once in his life betrayed into drinking too much wine at a call dinner. Returning home, he was obstreperous, and a policeman took him into custody. He had sufficient sense left to wish to avoid spending any part of the night in a cell, being brought before a magistrate, and, worst of all, having his name gibbeted in the papers. So he suggested to the policeman that if he took him quietly home, and received five shillings for his trouble, the arrangement would be mutually beneficial. The policeman, an intelligent man, perceived this, and led him home accordingly. My friend felt in all his pockets, and found himself penniless. Never mind, he had money in his bed-room, and would come down with the five shillings presently. So he let himself in with his latch-key, stumbled upstairs, felt giddy in the dark, rolled over on his bed, and went fast to sleep incontinently. How long that defrauded policeman remained in the street is not known; but he never entered the house to claim his guerdon.

Was this because he could not do so without a warrant? Or did he fear lest that five shillings should be looked upon as a bribe if the transaction transpired in Scotland-yard? In the latter case my theory is in the air; it has no support; it is a bubble.

Surely, a book ought to be published to enlighten us upon this and other important subjects connected with our houses. What is the use of a revolver if I cannot find out whom I may lawfully shoot, and under what circumstances? Is there any close season

for bailiffs, for example? I believe that burglars are fair game at any time, if they have actually effected an entry. But what is an entry? If the thief has thrust his arm through a window-pane, and is fumbling for the bolt, is that an entry? May I shoot all of him, or must I confine my attack to the portion of him inside? A burglar once got into a sewer, and tried to reach the back kitchen of a house by the sink. The cook was washing the caterpillars out of some brocoli, when a grating before her was thrust up, and an evil-looking head rose from it. She seized the hair with her left hand and a chopper with her right, and—well, I forget whether her name was Judith, but if so, it was a very appropriate one. Now, was she justified? or ought she to have waited till the whole body had emerged?

Or perhaps one should read the Riot Act before shooting; or it may be, since burglars now always seem to carry pistols, that they have a right to the first shot.

"Gentlemen of the jemmy, fire first!" would have a courteous and heroic ring about it; and in the dark, with a feather bed in front of one, it might even prove to be an advantageous arrangement.

This is an age of handbooks. There is "How I made £500 a year by my Fowls" (I have tried to do that, by the bye, and over an average of three years eggs cost me eighteen pence apiece)—and a score of others. Why not, "My House: how to get it, how to repair it, what I may not do in it, how to keep people I don't want out of it"? published by authority. All the judges should lay their heads, with the wigs on, together. The law language should be translated into English, and magistrates should be subject to fine and imprisonment if they gave any decision unwarranted by the text. Then we might know what we were about.

A house of one's own, with a garden round it, freehold—what a charming train of thought it conjures up! When the imagination has got so far, it necessarily branches off in the direction of a wife and children to put into it. But, alas! most of us get the wife and children, while the freehold property remains a dream. We live in a row, and pay rent: there is the sting of it—we pay rent. Next door neighbours are a nuisance, especially when they are hospitable or musical; but the grievance would become a luxury if it were our own house in

which we suffered it. The payment of rent is a humiliation, an acknowledgment of inferiority. A tenant feels that he is only a citizen, a parishioner on sufferance. He holds his home as reigning dukes used to hold their territories—by doing homage. When your lease is expired, your landlord can say to you "Turn out!" and turn out you must, though there were not another roof in the country for you to shelter under. How can Lares and Penates flourish under such circumstances?

There are long-headed, provident people, who realize their desire by joining some building society. I am not quite clear how it is all managed. I believe you pay twopence, or sixpence, or something a week for forty years, and then draw lots for plots of freehold ground. If you are unlucky you draw a pond, and start subscribing for another forty years afresh. If you are lucky, you get a splendid acre, gravel, close to a railway station, with a church and a clergyman matching your opinions to a shade quite handy; and on this you may, if you have the capital, build yourself a house of any size, form, or style that suits you. I have observed that my countrymen who attain houses in this ant-like manner, and indulge their own tastes in the erection, tend strongly towards campaniles; I don't know why, for they never put bells into them.

Perhaps the subscriptions are larger and the term of years shorter—I do not know. If you want information, get a prospectus.

Since the desire for a house of one's own is so general, it may seem strange to the inexperienced that indulgence in the luxury is not more common. But a house in a street or a terrace is not often to be had separately; and to buy the whole row, even if it is in the market, requires more capital than many possess. Again, the purchase of a house is a very risky thing. The title may be bad, in which case you may have to buy it all over again of another owner; or the roof may be bad, or the drains; or dry rot may be in it, or ghosts.

After you have bought your house, it may be necessary for you to move to another part of the country; and we have not yet learned the Californian dodge of carrying our houses about with us. There are wives whose constitutions permit them to reside in places where their husbands have pur-

chased property, but they are rare. So, altogether, most of us rent our habitations, and sigh over our ideal.

Some temporize: they build or buy a house, but not the ground it stands on. But ground rent seems to me the most unsatisfactory of all, because, if you do not pay, your creditor actually has your property to recoup himself with, which is a most aggravating idea.

A lady once went to an auction, and bought a house in a very favourite and fashionable locality. It was only leasehold; but the price it was going for was so very low, she was tempted: £100, I think, was the sum it was knocked down to her for, and she boasted of her bargain until she found she had to pay £300 a year ground rent, and that the house would not let for more than £200. I have been informed, but do not quite believe it, that her husband was vexed.

That was an exceptionally bad bargain; but few people, who are not criminals or paupers, are lodged for nothing. Clergymen, secretaries, and farm labourers, indeed, are sometimes housed; but then the fact is taken into consideration, and they pay indirectly. If you buy a house and live in it, you lose the interest of the money invested; so, as far as mere pecuniary considerations go, it comes pretty much to the same thing. Do not accuse me, oh, impatient reader, of boring you with trite truisms. These are merely the preface to a grand tip. I am about to inform you how you may live rent free.

I was travelling last year on the same steamboat as an American, who amused me very much with a variety of anecdotes, most of which were trade tricks. Indeed, they might have been collected and published under the title of "Caveat Emptor."

How much there is in the telling of a story! As a general rule, I sadly miss the point of a humorous fraud, for my sympathies are apt to lie with the cheatee rather than with the clever fellow who has outwitted him. But my present companion possessed the power of perverting my moral instincts for the time being; and I chuckled over deeds which, if committed against myself, I should consider the very reverse of funny.

I dare say you have observed, when reading the Great Biography, that however fluent Dr. Johnson might be, it was necessary for

Boswell to make an occasional remark. A similar obligation falling upon me, I observed that an American coming over to England would hardly care to exercise his talent for finesse; there would be no sport in it, the poor natives lying so completely at his mercy.

"Don't you believe it," said my companion, closing an eye. "I reckon you can take re-markably good care of yourselves over here. Why, one of the smartest tricks I ever knew was taught me the other day by a Londoner."

"Is it a secret?" I inquired.

"It is," he replied; "but I don't mind telling you. Four years ago I came over from New York to superintend the English business of the firm I belong to. As my residence was likely to be a long one, I looked out for a house within a convenient distance of London; for I am a family man, and like my children to have the run of the fields when I can manage it. I hate to see them dressed up fine; and what's one of those squares to play in? Well, I got just the thing to suit me—nice garden, farms all round, half an hour's railway ride from my office. The rent was stiff for the accommodation, which was but so-so—two hundred for a yearly tenancy, one hundred and fifty if I took a seven-year lease. I reckoned that I should want it for a good ten years, so I decided for the lease, especially as the agent told me I should be sure to underlet it if I wanted to. When I got to know my neighbours, and compared notes, I found that I was paying at a much higher rate than any of them were. However, that did not vex me, so long as I could live there. But after two years, certain changes took place which made it necessary that I should go and live at Liverpool. So I had to move again, and tried to underlet my house. I could not do it for some time, because I stood out for the rent I paid myself; but at last I grew tired of the dead loss, and told the agent to make the best terms he could. So he let the place for ninety, and that has been going on for four years, so that the lease is nearly up. But I never knew till last week who my tenant was. Who do you think?"

"I cannot guess."

"Why, my landlord. I have been paying the cuss sixty pounds a year for living in his own house all this time! It's a fact."

ANGUISH IN PRINT.

IN THE STRICTEST CONFIDENCE.

TEAR THE SIXTEENTH.

A MORNING OF MISERY.

MINE has been a troubled life, and I have often awoke of a morning with the sensation of a heavy, pressing-down weight upon my mental faculties; and so it was the morning after the dreadful catastrophe narrated in the last chapter. I awoke feeling—no, let me be truthful, I did not wake, for Patty Smith brought me to my senses by tapping my head with her nasty penetrating hair brush—feeling, as I said before, feeling that the dull pressure upon me was caused by the dread truth that poor Achille really was drowned; while it was the Signor whom I had heard escaping. And so strong was the impression, and so nervous and so low did I feel with the adventures of the past night, that I turned quite miserable, and could not keep from crying.

The morning was enough to give anybody the horrors, for it rained heavily; and there were the poor birds, soaking wet, and with their feathers sticking close to their sides, hopping about upon the lawn, looking for worms. All over the window panes, and hanging to the woodwork, were great tears, as if the clouds shared my trouble and sorrow; while all the flowers looked drooping and dirty, and splashed and miserable.

Then I began to think about Achille, and his coming to give his lesson that morning; and then about his being in the cistern, with those wonderful eyes looking out at me; when, there again, if there was not that tiresome Mr. Tennyson's poem getting into my poor, weary head, and, do what I would, I could not keep it out. There it was—buzz, buzz, buzz—"Dreary and weary, and will not come," she said;" till at last I began to feel as if I was the real Mariana in the Moated Grange.

To make me worse, too, there was that poor Clara—pale-faced, red-eyed, and desolate-looking—sitting there dressed, and resting her hot head upon her hand as she gazed out of the window; and though I wished to comfort her, I felt to want the comfort most myself. At last I could bear it no longer, and, in place of weeping gently, I was so nervous, and low, and upset with the night's troubles that I sat down and had a

regular good cry, and all the while with that great, stupid, fat, gawky goose of a Patty sitting and staring at me, with her head all on one side, as she was brushing out half of her hair, which she had not finished in all the time I had taken to dress.

"Don't, Patty!" I half shrieked, at last—she was so tiresome.

"Well, I aint," said Patty.

"But please don't, then!" I exclaimed, angrily.

"Don't what?" said the great, silly thing.

"Don't stare so, and look so big and glumpy!" I exclaimed; for I felt as if I could have knocked off her tiresome head, only it was so horribly big; and I don't care what anybody says, there never were anywhere before such a tempting pair of cheeks to slap as Patty's—they always looked so round, and red, and soft, and pluffy.

"You aint well," said the nasty, aggravating thing, in her silly, slow way. "Take one of my Seidlitz powders."

"Ugh!" I shuddered at the very name of them, just as if one of the nasty, prickly-water, nose-tickling things was going to do me any good at such a time as this.

It really was enough to make one hit her. I never did take a Seidlitz powder but once, and then it was just after reading "Undine" with the Fraulein, and my head was all full of water-nymphs, and gods, and "The Mummelsee and the Water Maidens," and all sorts; and when I shut my eyes, and drank the fizzing-up thing, it all seemed to tickle my nose and lips, and I declare if I did not half fancy I was drinking the waters of the sparkling Rhine, and one of the water gods had risen to kiss me, and that was his nasty prickly moustache I had felt. But to return to that dreadful morning when Patty wanted me to take one of her Seidlitz powders.

"Mix 'em in two glasses is best," she went on, without taking any notice of my look of disgust—"the white paper in one, and the blue paper in the other, and then drink off the blue first, and wait while you count twenty, and then drink off the white one—slushions they call 'em. It does make you feel so droll, and does your head ever so much good. Do have one, dear!"

I know that I must have slapped her—nothing could have prevented it—if just then the door had not opened, and that horrible Miss Furness came in.

"When you are ready, Miss Smith, you will descend with Miss Bozerne—I will

wait for you," said the screwy old thing; but she took not the slightest notice of poor Clara, who sat there by the window, with her forehead all wrinkled up, and looking at least ten years older. It was of no use for one's heart to bleed for her, not a bit, with Miss Furness there, who had undertaken to act the part of gaoler; so I gave the poor, suffering darling one last, meaning look, which was of no use, for it was wasted through the poor thing not looking up; and then I followed Miss Furness out of the room, side by side with Patty Smith, whose saucer eyes grew quite cheese-platish as she saw the door locked to keep poor Clara in; and then the tiresome thing kept bothering me in whispers to know what was the matter, for she was quite afraid of Miss Furness.

However, I answered nothing, and went into the miserable, dreary, damp-looking class-room with an aching heart, and waited till the breakfast bell rang; for there was a bell rung for everything, when there was not the slightest necessity for such a thing, only it all aided to make the Cedars imposing, and advertised it to the country round. But when I went into the hall, to cross it to reach the breakfast-room, there were a couple of boxes and a bundle at the foot of the back stairs, and the tall page getting himself into a tangle with some cord as he pretended to be tying them up.

Just then the drawing-room door opened, and I heard Mrs. Blunt say—

"And don't apply to me for a character, whatever you do;" whilst, very red-eyed and weeping, out came Ann, the housemaid.

"Once more," said Mrs. Blunt, "do you mean to tell me who it was that I distinctly saw, with my very own eyes, standing upon the leads talking to you?"

But Ann only gave a sob and a gulp, and I knew then that they did not know who had come to see her; whilst I felt perfectly certain that it was *the* policeman, and, besides, the Signor and Achille had seen what he was.

I was standing close to Miss Furness, who, as soon as she saw Ann, began to bridle up with virtuous indignation; and then set to and hunted the girls into the breakfast-room.

"Is Ann going away?" said Patty Smith, in her dawdly, sleepy way. "I like Ann. 'What's she going away for, Miss Furness, please?'"

"Hush!" exclaimed Miss Furness, in a horrified way. "Don't ask such questions. She is a very wicked and hardened girl, and Mrs. Fortesquieu de Blount has dismissed her, lest she should contaminate either of the other servants."

"I'll tell you all about it, presently," whispered Celia Blang; but not in such a low voice but that the indignant Miss Furness overheard her.

"You will do nothing of the kind," said the cross old maid, "and I desire that you instantly go back to your seat. If you know anything, you will be silent—silence is golden—such things are not to be talked about, Miss Blang."

Celia made a grimace behind her back, although she was said to be Miss Furness's spy, and supposed to tell her everything; so Patty's curiosity remained unsatisfied, while of course I pretended to know nothing at all about what had been going on.

Directly after breakfast, though, Patty had it all by heart, and came red-hot to tell me how that Clara had been caught trying to elope out of the conservatory window, whilst Ann was talking from the hall staircase; when Miss Sloman happened to hear a whispering—for she was lying awake with a bad fit of the toothache. So she went and alarmed the lady principal; and then, with Miss Furness and the Fraulein, they had all watched, and they found it out; while some one had been in the tank, and the conservatory windows were broken, and that was all, except that Mrs. Blunt had been writing to Lady Fitzacre—Clara's mamma—and the poor girl was to be expelled; while for the present she was to be kept in her room till her mamma came, unless she would say who was the gentleman she was about to elope with—such stuff!—and then, if she would confess, she was to sit with Mrs. Blunt, under surveillance, as they called it; when, leaving alone betraying the poor Signor, of course Clara preferred staying in her own room.

Such a miserable wet morning, and though I wanted to, very badly indeed, I could not get into the conservatory to set my poor mind at rest by poking down into the cistern with a blind lath; for if I had gone it might have raised suspicions. Could he still be in the tank, and were my thoughts in slumber right?

"Oh, how horrible!" I thought; "why, I should feel always like his murderer."

But, there, I could not help it—it was fate, my fate, and his fate—my fate to be his murderess, his to be drowned; and I would have given worlds, if I had had them, to be able to faint, when about eleven o'clock the cook came to the door, and asked Mrs. Blunt, in a strange, mysterious way, to please come into the conservatory, for the thin footman had not come back from the station, and taking Ann's boxes.

"Oh, he's there, he's there!" I muttered, as I wrung my hands beneath the table, and closed my eyes, thinking of the inquest and the other horrors to come; and seeing in imagination his wet body laid upon the white stones in the conservatory.

Oh, how I wanted to faint—how I tried to faint, and go off in a deep swoon, that should rest me for a while from the racking thoughts that troubled me. But I could not manage it anyhow; for of course nothing but the real thing would do at such a time as this.

Out went Mrs. Blunt, to return in five minutes with what I thought to be a terribly pale face, when she beckoned out the three teachers who were most in her confidence, Miss Murray being considered too young and imprudent.

There! I never felt anything so agonizing in my life—never; and I could not have borne it any longer anyhow. I'm sure, in another moment I must have been horribly hysterical and down upon the floor, tapping the boards with my heels, as I once saw mamma—and of course such things are hereditary—only I was saved by hearing a step upon the gravel, when my heart leaped just after the fashion of that gentleman's who wanted Maud to come into the garden so very badly. For there I could see the real eyes coming along the shrubbery, peeping over the fur collar of a long cloak, which hung down to the heels. And I felt so relieved, that a great heavy sob, that had been sticking in my throat all the morning, leaped out so suddenly that I saw Patty Smith look up and stare.

Then came tramping in Mrs. Blunt and the three teachers, and as they whispered together, I was quite startled as they talked about something being dragged out of the cistern with the tongs. And now I knew it could not be Achille, but made sure it was the poor Signor; when I felt nearly as bad as before, though I kept telling myself that it was quite impossible for them to have

lifted the poor, dear, drowned man out with a pair of tongs—even if he was not so very stout. But there, my misery was again put an end to by the Fraulein, who said, out loud—

"Ah, yes, it was. I see de mark—C. Fitzacre."

And then I knew that it must have been one of Clara's handkerchiefs that had been found, and "blessed my stars that my stars blessed me" by not letting it be my handkerchief that they had discovered.

But there was a step in the hall, and how my heart fluttered!

"Monsieur Achille de Cochonet for the French lesson," squeaked Miss Furness.

And soon after we were busy at work, going over the irregular verbs, while I could see Achille's eyes wandering from face to face, as if to see whether there were any suspicion attaching to him. Then followed the reading and exercise correcting, while I could see plainly enough that he was terribly agitated—so much so, that he made at least four mistakes himself, and passed over several in the pupils; while when he found that I did not give him a note with my exercise—one that should explain, I suppose, all that had since passed—when I had not had the eighth part of a chance to write one, he turned so cross and pettish, and snapped one, and snubbed another; while as for poor me, I could have cried, I could, only that all the teachers and Mrs. Blunt were there, and Miss Furness looked so triumphant.

As a rule, all the teachers did not stay in the room while the French lessons were progressing, and this all tended towards making poor Achille fidgety and cross; but he need not have behaved quite so unkindly to me, for I'm sure I had been suffering quite enough upon his account, and so I should have liked to have told him if I had had the opportunity; while now that all this upset had come, I felt so sorry for the disloyal thoughts that I had had, and should have been ready to do anything for his sake.

The lessons were nearly over, when all at once the door opened suddenly, and I saw poor Achille jump so that the pen with which he was correcting Patty Smith's exercise made a long scrawling tail to one of the letters; but he recovered himself directly.

Well, the door opened suddenly, and the cook stood there, wiping her floury hands,

for it was pasty waster day, and she exclaimed loudly—

"O 'm! please 'm! the little passage is all in a swim."

"C-o-o-o-k!" exclaimed Mrs. Blunt, in a dreadful voice, as if she meant to slay her upon the spot.

"O 'm! please 'm!" cried cook again.

"Why, where is James, cook?" said Mrs. Blunt, sternly.

"Cleaning hisself, mum," said cook; "and as Hann's gone, mum, I was obliged to come—not as I wanted to, I'm sure," and cook looked very much ill-used.

Mrs. Blunt jumped up, as much to get rid of the horrible apparition as anything; while cook continued—

"There, do come, mum; it's perfectly dreadful!" and they went off together; when such a burst of exclamations followed that the three lady teachers rose and left the room, and I took the opportunity of Miss Murray's back being turned to exchange glances with poor Achille, who had, at the least, been wet; while I longed, for poor Clara's sake, to ask him about the Signor. But to speak was impossible, while there were too many eyes about for the glance to be long. So I let mine drop to my exercise, and then sat, with a strange, nervous sensation that I could not explain creeping over me, and it seemed like the forerunner of something about to happen.

Just then Miss Furness hurried in and out again, leaving the door ajar, so that from where I sat I could command a view of the little passage, and saw Mrs. Blunt walk up, jingling her keys, and stepping upon the points of her toes over a little stream of water that was slowly flowing along; when going up to the store-room door, I heard the key thrust in, as impelled by I know not what, I left my seat, and formed one of the group which stood looking upon the little stream that I could now see came from beneath the store-room door.

"The skylight must have been left open," exclaimed Mrs. Blunt, flinging open the door, and at the same moment the recollection of the crash flashed across my mind; while, as she flung open the door, in her pompous, bouncing way, Mrs. Blunt was about to step in, when—horror of horrors! how can I describe it all? There was the floor of the little room covered with broken glass, water, bits of putty, wood, and a mass

of broken jam pots; while the little table that had evidently stood beneath the skylight, had two of its legs broken off, and had slid its saccharine burden) that is better than saying load of jam) upon the floor in hideous ruin. Some pots were broken to pieces, some in half; while others had rolled to the other end of the room, and were staining their paper covers, or dyeing the water with their rich, cloying contents. But worse, far worse than all—with his face cut, scratched, and covered with dry blood, his shirt front and waistcoat all jam, crouching back in the farthest corner, was the poor Signor—regularly trapped when he had fallen through the skylight; for it was impossible for any one to have climbed up to the opening, through which the rain came like a shower bath, while there was no other way of exit.

The lady principal shrieked, the lady teachers performed a trio of witch-screams—the most discordant ever uttered—and my Lady Blunt would have plashed down into the puddle, only, seeing how wet it was, she only reeled and clung to me, who felt ready to drop myself, as I leaned against the wall half swooning.

Alarmed by the shrieks, Achille came running out, looking, as I thought, very pale.

"Ladies, ladies!" he ejaculated, "ma foi, qu'est ce que c'est?"

"Help, help! Monsieur Achille," gasped Mrs. Blunt.

And he hurried forward, and relieved me of my load.

"Fetch the police," cried Miss Furness.

"Nein, nein—it is a mistake," whispered the Fraulein, who had a penchant, I think, for the poor Signor.

"Signor Fazzoletto, it is thou!" exclaimed Achille, with an aspect of the most profound amazement as he caught sight of his unfortunate friend—an aspect which was, indeed, truthful.

For, as he afterwards told me, he had been so drenched in the cistern, and taken up with making his own escape, that he had thought no more of the poor Signor; while, being a wet morning, he had not sought his lodging—which was some distance from the town—before coming, though he was somewhat anxious to consult him upon the previous night's alarm, and hardly dared to show himself. So—

"Signor Fazzoletto, it is thou!" he ex-



claimed, regularly taken aback, as the sailors say.

"Altro! altro!" ejaculated the poor man, who sadly wanted to make his escape, but could see no better chance now than there had been all the night.

For the passage was blocked, while in the hall were collected together all the pupils and the servants—that gawky James towering above them all, like a horrible lamp-post in a crowd.

"My salts," murmured Madame Blunt.

When if that dreadful Achille did not place another arm around her; and that nasty old thing liked it, I could see, far more than Miss Furness did, and hung upon him, pretending to faint; when I could have given anything to have snatched her away.

"Pauvre chère dame," murmured Achille, giving me at the same moment a comical look out of the corner of his eye.

"Oh! Monsieur Achille," said Mrs. Blunt, feebly, "oh, help! Send away that wretch. Otez moi cet homme là."

"Aha! yais! mais oui!" exclaimed Achille—the base deceiver, to play such a part! "Sare, you are not business here. Madame dismiss. Take away yourself off. Go!"

I give this just as Achille spoke it; for I cannot but feel angry at the deceitful part he had played.

The Signor looked at Achille, and gave him such a diabolical grin—just as if he would have liked to stiletto him upon the spot, with one of the pieces of broken glass. Then he looked at me, bestowing upon me a meaning glance, as he made a rush past us all, and escaped by the front door; but not without splashing right through the puddle, and sending the water all over the Fraulein, so that she exclaimed most indignantly, until the front door closed with a heavy bang.

A HOLIDAY IN THE NORTH.

II.

ABOUT a mile from Thorshavn the bridle road suddenly broke off, and landed us in a perfect Slough of Despond. We heard that this road was being always added to by the islanders, each man devoting a certain time in every year to its service. Accordingly, it is continually piercing farther and farther into the island; but where it

is intended ultimately to lead to, we could not make out.

Having with some difficulty circumvented the Slough of Despond, we made straight across the valley on our left, and, on crossing the stream we had seen in the morning, began the ascent of our hill. It was a much longer business than we had imagined, however; and about half-way up we found it convenient to stop and admire the prospect by a little runnel, where we could quench our thirst. On resuming the ascent, we straggled a good deal, and on reaching the ridge had some difficulty in finding one another again, as each had gone off in pursuit of what he imagined to be the summit. The top of this hill was the very imperfection—if I may use the word in such a sense—of a "howling wilderness," strewn in all directions with stones and boulders of every size and shape. When one was once fairly in the middle of it, one could see nothing but a stone-strewn desert on every side, bounded by the blue sky; and it was no easy matter to decide which direction to take.

However, we eventually got together again upon what we all agreed was the true summit, and then made our way more to westward, in order to get the view on the other side of the island, our curiosity having been excited by a most remarkable mountain top which for some little time past had allowed us to catch glimpses of it on the north-west. On reaching the shoulder of the hill our curiosity was fully gratified; for a most striking scene presented itself.

The ground fell away below us in a steep slope, which soon curved out of sight; and the next thing that met the eye was the blue, calm sea of Hestoe Fiord, 650 feet below us, with one or two dark specks of boats upon its surface. To the left lay the island of Sandoe, and right opposite that of Hestoe, which seemed to rise up out of the water like a green wall—on which we could just make out a zigzag path, leading from the little bright green patch surrounding the village on the shore to the summit of the ridge, over which it disappeared. Separated from Hestoe by a stretch of sea narrowing into a fiord little more than a mile wide, was the island of Kolter, the top of which had already attracted our attention when we could see nothing else. And a most extraordinary island it was: like some huge crystal rearing itself up out of the ocean, leaning

apparently a little to one side, terminating in a blunt point, and descending into the sea on the farther side in a sheer precipice, extending almost from top to bottom of the island.

To the right of Kolter, and some distance behind it, the magnificent cliffs of Waagoe were to be seen; and the view was closed on the right by the steep, rolling promontories of the island we were on.

When we had thoroughly taken in the splendid panorama, and one of our party had made a sketch of Kolter, we resumed our walk, and made a sharp descent to a deep valley, with a little lake in its midst. On our way down, we gained some idea of what must be the violence of the storms on that exposed hillside; for here and there, crossing perfectly bare patches of gravel, we noticed that it had the appearance of having been combed downwards with the slope of the hill, in a most wonderfully regular manner. This, we concluded, must have been due to the torrents of rain which had fallen on the islands during the recent rough weather.

On our way down, we started several blue hares among the rocks; and the number of birds—plovers, gulls, oyster-catchers, &c.—that were continually whirling round our heads was so great, that we could almost have knocked them over with stones. Crossing the valley, we ascended again, and passing over the spur of the hill, looked out for a convenient spot whereon to consume our bread and sausage. We soon found a little clear, cold spring, welling from the hillside; and seating ourselves round it on the grass, we emptied our pockets, and fell to with a will. But we were obliged to stop only too soon, by reason of our limited stock of provisions. However, it was some time before we got tired of lying chatting on the grass in the hot sun, and vowing that we had never spent a pleasanter day. But we had to make a move some time, and at last we bestirred ourselves; and, after a parting look at the glorious view to westward, turned off down a valley in the direction of Thors-havn.

Before long, however, we came in sight of the *Diana*; and finding we were much nearer our temporary home than we had imagined, we determined not to return just yet, and accordingly struck off in a northerly direction up a long, green valley, closed in by a ridge, in which there was a slight depression, or col, which seemed to us

to say—"Just come and see what is at the other side of me."

There was nothing very interesting in the valley itself; but we plodded steadily on, across the stream at the bottom, and in a slanting direction up the opposite slope, until at last we stood upon the summit of the col. At first we were a little disappointed with the view from here, for little was to be seen but a perfect chaos of hill-tops; but after descending for some little way, following a rushing stream, which, on its way, passed over a very beautiful fall—we came to the edge of a sort of step in the mountain side, and suddenly discovered, right below our feet, a charming little fiord running into the land, and on its edge a group of two or three houses, which, from the height at which we were, looked like children's toys. This little fiord—which, on reference to the map, we found was Kalbak's Fiord, the group of houses being the village of Sund—was a sort of arm of another one, not much wider, which separated the islands of Stromoe and Osteroe; and the hill-tops we had lately seen before us, all lay on the other side of this fiord, in the island of Osteroe, or beyond it. The shore on the other side of Kalbak's Fiord was as abrupt as the one on which we stood; while beyond the head of the fiord rose a pyramidal peak in purple grandeur.

When we had taken all this in, we began to look about for means of getting down to the village below us; but we found that between us and it there was a sheer precipice of some sixty or seventy feet. This had to be circumvented, and we followed along its brink to the left, searching for some sort of break in the wall of rock which would enable us to scramble down; but for a long time we searched in vain.

In one place a stream leaped over the cliff, and a little farther on a cleft in the rock seemed to offer a means of descent; but we did not try it there, and were afterwards very thankful that we had not done so—for, on looking up at it from below, we saw that just under where we had stood it ended suddenly, without the slightest warning, in a perfectly smooth face of rock; in fact, it was almost the worst place we could see in the whole length of the precipice. A little farther on, however, we thought we saw some traces of a path, and on following them carefully, we managed, by dint of crawling with our bodies flat against the

rock, to effect a descent, and found ourselves on a steep slope of grass leading down to the water's edge. We were very soon at the bottom of this; and as we were beginning to feel hungry again, and had nothing more to expect from the *Diana* until next morning, we made our way into the best-looking house (on the roof of which haymaking was going on), and, by various expressive signs, intimated to the occupants that we were hungry, and wanted some food.

They immediately silenced their barking dogs, and led us through several apartments into the best room, and left us to ourselves while some refreshment was being procured. We turned our attention to an examination of the room—whose furniture consisted of a table, with somewhat uncertain legs, an uncomfortable square, print-covered sofa, a few chairs, and a chest of drawers. Upon this last stood a somewhat aged English clock, with a picture of (if I remember rightly) St. Paul's Cathedral on the glass before the face, and hands which had apparently for some time suffered from total paralysis. The floor and walls were of unpainted deal, and on the latter hung coloured prints of the King and Queen of Denmark.

By the time we had made our survey of the room, the good woman of the house returned, and set before us each a tumblerful of milk, and in the midst a large jug of the same (quite emptied before we bade her good-bye), a loaf of black bread, some butter, and, subsequently, a gigantic bowl of sour cream, with a crust of pounded sugar. This last we treated very cautiously, as we still had a long walk before us.

While thus engaged, we carried on a most curious conversation with our hostess, the chief drawback to which was that neither understood a word of the other's language. We, nevertheless, managed to obtain some information from her, chiefly concerning the road back to Thorshavn; and having finished our meal, and taken leave of the family and household by shaking hands all round, we set off to return to the *Diana*.

The path led us seaward, along the side of the fiord, rising gradually all the way, until we found ourselves at a considerable height above the water. It was now nearly eight o'clock; and the exquisite evening lights induced us to sit down for a while, and watch the sun set behind the mountains which closed in the head of the fiord.

There we lay on the smooth green slope for more than half an hour, enjoying ourselves most thoroughly; for though after eight o'clock p.m., and a long way from home, there was no fear of being benighted in these latitudes; and the *Diana*, we knew, would not leave till nine or ten o'clock on the following morning. The glassy blue fiord was just at our feet, but far below us; the hills opposite were in deep shadow, and the sun was setting gorgeously on our left, in a sky cloudless but for two masses of cumulus—one of which looked exactly like a pile of plates, and the other like the sole of a shoe—which were right opposite the sun, and caught its last rays of rosy light. It was very enjoyable; and we did not move until the sun had quite disappeared behind the mountains, and we began to feel the evening chill.

Then we got up, and the ridge of the hill was soon between us and the scene we had so appreciated. We now plodded steadily on, not much caring about the path—which we kept losing and finding again alternately—as we knew the direction in which Thorshavn lay, and had the whole night before us.

ONLY A YEAR.

CHAPTER XIII.

"I FEEL SO SECURE."

"HOW happy I am!" was the one exclamation in Phillis Kyriel's heart that night, and it is not often that any of us can say as much. Is it not ever, "How happy I was!" or "How happy I shall be!"? To grasp happiness as a tangible thing, safe in our possession, is an experience which comes to few of us, and then seldom more than once in a lifetime.

She told no one about it; her love affairs had received such a check long ago that she was slow at making confidants, and now kept her joy to herself, as she had hitherto kept her sorrows.

"He must tell them," she thought. "After the ball will do."

And as she sat before her fire alone, she compared her happiness with that of six years ago.

"Hasson was not good," she thought, "and in my way I knew it. He was not at all noble or generous, even in those days, for I have known him do underhand things;

and though I did love him very much, I don't think I ever trusted him. And I trust Archer Thyrlle as I never did any other man I ever saw in my life. He has something of the same open, honest way Gilfred has; but twice as much character, and is almost ten times cleverer. I feel so secure—I am so certain he is true, and really worth loving. He will be generous to me, and overlook my faults until I can conquer them. I was silly enough to try him even this evening. But I was so happy myself. Yet I wish I had let him kiss me; it would perhaps have made up to him a little. But, never mind, I will be very good to-morrow night. I don't deserve to be so happy, I know. I have not been a good girl; but he has always been upright and noble, and I will do all—anything to make him happy at last. I feel as if my love for Hasson had been like the house built on the sand, while this is founded on the rock. How little I thought this morning what a day this would be to me! And he is such a favourite here! They all like him, and—oh, what a good thought!—dear old Fred will be able to get this weary money for his company! A man who flings away thousands on his enemy will surely be able to lend a few hundreds to his friend. It is all very pleasant. He has no idea yet how much I care for him. I am glad I am handsome, for his sake."

And she began to think that she must not indulge in late hours, as she would have plenty of them the next night.

But the dark eyes that were glad to see their own beauty were not raised to the Giver of all good things, and the proud head was not bent submissively in the knowledge that He who gives can also take away. The light heart beat itself to rest, and forgot, in its fancied security, that happiness is not always dealt out to men as they believe it to be deserved, but for higher purposes than mortal wisdom can always comprehend.

Sir George Rose had a distinguished guest staying at Hensley Towers—a certain Colonel Dynesford, who had done good service in the Indian mutiny (not long past), and who was to be the hero of the evening. He was also heir to a baronetcy, and the possessor of a large fortune, was scarcely forty, good-looking, and a bachelor. Such high recommendations drew many bright eyes on him, and there was not a mamma in the room who would not have been grati-

fied to see him bestow even the slightest attention on her daughter.

The country dance had not yet struck up, and Sir George and Lady Rose were still occupied in receiving the continuous flow of new-comers, when Colonel Dynesford approached Sir George, and said—

"Who is that marvellously handsome girl just come into the room? She is in white, with splendid diamonds—don't you see? Very dark hair and eyes, and a pearl-white complexion."

"Oh, Phillis Kyriel, evidently! Where is she?" answered Sir George. "Yes, I see. Glorious she looks to-night. What jewels she has on! I didn't know the Kyriels had such diamonds as that necklace—it beats my wife's. Yes, Kyriel, Miss Kyriel is the name. She is talking to young Thyrlle, and he is the best rider across country in the county. Gilfred is there, too, and Kittie, and that Mr. Brooke. They are coming up here now. Do you want to be introduced to Miss Kyriel?"

"Certainly."

"Well, take care of yourself, for she has but one fault—she is a merciless flirt; thinks less of breaking your heart than she would of cracking a tea cup. How are you, Gilfred? How d'ye do, Phillis? Colonel Dynesford wishes to be introduced to you. Colonel Dynesford—Miss Kyriel. Well, Kittie, blooming as ever? Did you get safe home yesterday, Mr. Brooke, with those skittish little beasts? I thought you would have tumbled Kittie into a ditch. Not much more hunting for a week or so, Mr. Thyrlle; hard frost this evening, and heaven knows how long it may go on, now it has begun."

Mr. Thyrlle, turning at last from his host's greetings to Miss Kyriel, found her card in the hands of Colonel Dynesford, who was making entries therein. She looked at it when it was returned.

"You have taken too many," she said; "I only answered for one. I shall not consider this last one as binding."

"I hope you will be generous," he answered, just as Lord Ashley came up to claim Miss Kyriel as his partner in the country dance.

"I am very sorry, Lord Ashley," she said, putting her hand in Thyrlle's arm, "but I am engaged."

"Surely, not for this dance?—our old country dance!" he exclaimed, quite aghast.

Phillis blushed a good deal under the inquiring eyes of Colonel Dynesford, and again murmuring, "I am very sorry," moved away with Thyrlé.

Lord Ashley subsided into a seat, and declined all Lady Rose's efforts to get him any other partner.

Peculiarly merry was that country dance; Sir George leading off with Lord Ashley's mother, the Countess of Knollinghamshire, closely followed by her husband, the earl, and his partner, Lady Rose.

Down the middle and up again, hands across and back again, set to partners and off again! If anything in this world was well calculated to set the spirit of merriment going, and to dispel the sometimes fatal English dullness and formality, it was surely a dance like that one. Every one was laughing, breathless, and thoroughly warmed on the cold March night, when it was over; and a rush was made for claret cup, champagne, tea—anything. As Thyrlé and Phillis left the dancing-room in the general quest, she whispered—

"You should not have made me dance that with you. Look how dull and disappointed Lord Ashley looks. I have danced the first dance here with him ever since I was at a ball at all."

"It is quite time, then, that you should give up that practice," rejoined Thyrlé, with some sternness. "I am sorry he should have taken it to heart; but forgive me if I say I think it would have been more dignified in you to have refused him such a trifle long ago, than to have allowed him to hope a great deal, only to make him suffer a far deeper disappointment."

Phillis looked down, her cheeks burning under the tone of this reproof. She hastily raised her glass to her lips, but not before Thyrlé, very much surprised, caught sight of a tear which had started at his words, and which fell before she could control it.

"Phillis!" he said, in a tone she only could hear, and which she had never heard from him before, "what have I said? Do you really so much care for me, or what I say to you? Shall we come away from here?"

She assented; and guided by Phillis, who knew the house well, they entered a small conservatory, beyond a snug little boudoir. It was all lighted up, but no one had penetrated so far as yet.

"Shall we let the first waltz go?" Phillis

said. "You know, I can't possibly dance three dances running with you—at the very beginning of the evening too."

"Can't you? Then let me see what others you will give me instead."

Having made his selection, and seated himself beside her, he said—

"Do you know, Phillis, from your manner to me last night, I more than half thought you did not care at all for me. Do you mean to say that any words of mine have power to draw tears from you?"

"It was very foolish," she admitted; "but I don't think you knew how severely you spoke."

"Is it true, then," he continued, "that you are thoroughly in earnest?—that you really mean to marry me—for love, too?"

"What do you want me to say, Mr. Thyrlé?" asked Phillis, a little distressed and surprised.

He spoke very quietly, not looking at her—she thought, with a strange pang, not thinking of her.

"Will you say, 'Archie, I love you'?"

"He is thinking of Alice Graham!"

And with a wretched jealousy that even his memory should have strayed for a moment to other and perhaps happier days, she laughed, and said—

"You are exacting, Mr. Thyrlé. What will happen if I won't repeat the formula?"

"Nothing," he answered, a little sadly. "It does not signify—it was only a whim. I dare say you will like me pretty well after a while, if what I wish to believe is true."

And her pride—a good deal hurt by the distrust apparent not only in his words but in his manner—prevented her showing him her whole heart, full of honest, true love for him, and forced back tears which again filled her eyes—this time unseen.

She sat quite silent, her rich colour all died away. He took her hand in his presently, and asked—

"Phillis, do you consider yourself engaged to me?"

She might easily have satisfied him now; but her old habits of coquetry, so long indulged, were coming fast upon her again. She thought he ought to be punished for not having perfect confidence in her.

"I think not," she replied, a little saucily—"not until it is formally given out, and mamma and all of them know."

"Then you have not told them; and you

would not allow me to come to-day and do so."

She heard pain and doubt in his tone.

"You are very hard to please, to-night," she remarked. "I wonder what you can want?"

The words he answered haunted her for a long, weary time afterwards, and were never free of the ring of pathos he spoke them with—

"I want a kind word from you, Phillis. My life has been a very lonely one, and you, who have had so many always to love you, cannot guess how much it would be to me if you would say something by which I could be certain that you have some—even a little—affection for me."

Foolish words again rose to her lips, and were spoken instead of the kind words he craved for.

"What an autocrat you will be some day!"

He let go her hand.

"I think you mean to play me false; and find, from my being unaccustomed to young ladies like yourself, that you can carry the joke rather farther with me than with most men."

She could bear the distrust and reproach in his tone and words no longer, but she would not see how deeply in earnest he was. With a sort of half comic, half repentant voice and look, she said—

"Now I will be good, and try to say my lesson. How did it begin?—'Archie, I love you!' I don't know if we are engaged or not, but after vos réprimandes sérieuses—que voulez-vous?—I think if we are not we ought to be. And what else? Something with affection in it. Vous en parlez bien à votre aise—enfin! mon cher! Tout est fait."

He sprang to his feet, angry at last.

"I think you are thoroughly heartless," he exclaimed; "you are merely laughing at me! Are you content now with your success on my credulity, or do you wish to carry on the farce?"

She rose too, and put her hand in his arm. She saw now she had gone too far, and felt sick and trembling with fear of what her folly might cost her.

"You wish to go?" he asked, haughtily.

"Not just yet. I am not heartless, Mr. Thyrlé. I don't know why you are so cross with me to-night. Are you sure I don't care for you? See!"

She hastily glanced round the conser-

vatory—it was still vacant, and she bent forward and pressed her soft lips on his gloved hand.

He started as if she had given him an electric shock.

"I don't—understand—" he stammered.

She shook her head, her eyes looking a little misty.

"It takes a very wise man to understand even a foolish woman," she laughed; "only"—imploringly—"you are not angry with me now?"

"I wonder who could be for more than ten minutes together. But, Phillis, I wish you were less beautiful and charming, or that I had something more than I have to offer you. I never troubled myself about my parents or my position till I knew you, then—"

"Pray don't begin it now. It was your openness about these things that I admired you so much for at first."

He smiled.

"Don't let us miss the galop."

"No—they are still playing the waltz. Mr. Thyrlé—"

"Do you know, I rather object to that mode of address, Miss Kyriel?"

"What *can* I call you?"

"Only Alice ever called me Archie," he answered; "but I should like you to."

That indescribable jealousy overcame her again, and she replied—

"Some day, perhaps."

Thyrlé looked at the face which was such an inscrutable riddle to him, with the constantly recurring doubts of its truth which he could not stifle in his mind.

"What were you going to say?" he asked.

She touched the locket he always wore, colouring a little.

"You know," she said, "when you lost that, and I picked it up, I told you I would some day ask you for a reward."

"Yes. I think you understood at the time that there was *nothing* I would not give you in return that I was able to? Have you arrived at the price at last?"

"I arrived at it then and there, but I did not dare to ask then, and I scarcely like to now."

"Is your recompense to be so large, or am I so formidable?"

"Don't do it unless you *quite* like, and don't think me very inquisitive, but—will you show me what is in it?"

"Is that all?"

But he did not open the locket with alacrity, though he obeyed her behest, and put it into her hands—yet without taking it off the chain.

Phillis saw the face of a girl which, even in the miniature, was of spirituelle, unearthly beauty. Eyes of sapphire blue, strangely calm and yet earnest, met hers; rich golden hair was swept back off a brow as pure and fair as a child's, but not without its cloud of trouble and suffering. The face was deathly pale, and there were shadows under the blue eyes, a pallor about the lips, and a transparent look at the temples which gave it an expression which would have been painful had it not been for the patient sweetness of the softly cut mouth, and the joy—not of this world—that lighted those clear, true eyes. It was impossible to look at such a face, and not feel it was that of one in whom

"Sorrow and silence are strong, and patient endurance is godlike."

And a great longing, which seemed to make her heart stand still, came over Phillis that she could possess but a tithe of the love Thyrlé still bore this fair Alice Graham, and be a hundredth part as worthy of it.

"It is like the face of an angel," she said, at length relinquishing it. "I don't wonder you prize it."

"It is the face of an angel," he replied, a certain quiet solemnity in his tone—"of my good angel. I owe all the little good that is in me to her, and if ever I get to Heaven it will be—" he stopped abruptly, and added, smiling, "I think we have got into a very sober conversation for a ball."

"I like to hear you talk soberly," she said; "and I want to know how and where you got such a beautiful picture taken?"

"It was done by an artist I knew in Paris, who painted miniatures exquisitely. He came to Cumberland at my request, and took this likeness for me a short time before her death. I wish I could show you a picture of her as she was two years before! Well, Phillis, are you satisfied now? May I come over to the Manor House to-morrow?"

"Mamma will be so pleased—so surprised," said Phillis, blushing.

"What time shall I come?"

"Oh, don't be late. Kittie and I will be up early, to see Fred and Mr. Brooke off. Come in time for luncheon, and don't tell Fred. I will write to him afterwards about it."

"You have more whims than there are in a fairy tale—but as you like," he said, laughing.

"You wouldn't—I suppose you wouldn't care much for a photograph of *me*?" she asked, in an off-hand tone, but her heart trembling for his reply. It was rather reproachful—

"Dearest! you know I would!"

That one word gave her all the happiness she needed: her cup was full. She was at any rate his "dearest" now, and it would be strange if she could not find a way to make him love her, even as well as he had loved Alice Graham.

She led him into the boudoir, and sought about on the table for an album, which she presently found.

"You are going to be the receiver of stolen goods, sir," she said, as she extracted a vignette of herself from the book; "but I will put one in again before this is likely to be missed. Now, can you carry it, after all?"

"Easily, and thank you very much, dear."

He looked at it scrutinizingly for a few minutes, then put it in his breast pocket.

"It is a beautiful face, Phillis, but only one of yours—you have so many."

"Many faces, Mr. Thyrlé!"

"A great many, Miss Kyriel, and some of them very difficult to read. I seldom know whether you are in jest or earnest."

"Do you think I am in earnest now?"

"Can't say, I'm sure."

"Well, I am—very much so. And I want a photograph of you, if you will bring me one to-morrow."

"I should be very glad if I could, but I must be taken first; then I will."

"You don't mean to say you have never been photographed?"

"I do. Dreadful, isn't it?"

"I never heard of such a thing! You are the first man or woman I ever met who can say that. You must go to Knollingham some day soon—there is a tolerably good man there."

And he promised to obey her.

"Have I thanked you for this?" she said, as they left the boudoir, touching her brilliant necklace. "I never told any of them at home about it. I put my cloak over it when I bid mamma good night, and Kittie, I think, is far too happy herself to-night to notice what I wear. Fred is always sublimely indifferent about such things, and would hardly

know if I were covered with jewels. It is such a splendid necklace—such glorious diamonds! A queen might be proud of them. I was half afraid to put on such a magnificent affair."

They had reached the ball-room now, and joined in the dance. At the conclusion of the galop, Phillis was claimed by Colonel Dynesford, and Thyrlé found Grace Grainger, who greeted him with all her warm little heart, and who would have done anything or danced anything he liked, in her gratitude.

During one of the few pauses in the ensuing Lancers, she remarked, innocently enough—

"I'm so sorry—arent you? about poor Gilfred Kyriel. He is in such bad spirits to-night, poor fellow—he is so very much disappointed."

Thyrlé had only opportunity to vaguely assent; but when the dance was over, he sat down by Miss Grainger, and said—

"What was it you were saying to me about Kyriel? Why is he disappointed?"

"Oh, don't you know? Perhaps I should not have said anything about it, but you are so much at the Manor House—"

"Well?"

"*He* doesn't make any secret of it, so I don't know why I should not tell you. There either is or soon will be a step going in his regiment, and he has not money enough to purchase. I don't quite understand about it; but he says it would cost him eight or nine hundred pounds more than he has to get his company. He went up to London, he told me, to see if he could raise the money; but he says it would 'cost too much.' I think by that he meant," she explained, for Thyrlé's benefit, "that he would have to pay more interest for the money than he can afford. You know the Kyriels are not very well off, though they have that fine old place, and are the oldest family in the county, except the Roses. But it is a pity about Gilfred, isn't it?"

Thyrlé could not be quite sure that this confidence was reposed in him entirely without a motive. Was it not possible that this artless-looking little girl might remember that Mr. Thyrlé was reported to be very rich? And she was quite aware that he was very intimate with Gilfred, and also that Gilfred would rather never get his company at all than say as much as this himself to Thyrlé. If she thought all this, her

instinct had not misled her with regard to her confidant.

"It would indeed be a pity if he were to miss his chance. I suppose he will be purchased over if he does not purchase himself?"

"Yes."

"If you don't mind my leaving you, Miss Grainger, I'll go and talk to Kyriel about this. I dare say we can make it all right between us. It was very kind in you to tell me of it."

He received a very bright smile, and strolled across the room to Gilfred, who was looking on at the gay scene with rather a sombre face. Thyrlé had to use a good deal of persuasion to make young Kyriel consent to accept his money on the conditions he offered it—namely, that no interest should be paid, and that it might be returned within any time that should suit Gilfred, and that the latter should give him no security beyond an I O U, and that was not in the least desired. In truth, Thyrlé meant that the money should never be repaid—it was not likely he would ever take it back from Phillis's brother. But, remembering her injunctions, he said nothing of this, and was amply repaid by Gilfred's hearty grasp of his hand, while he said—

"You are a good fellow, Thyrlé. By Jove, I know now what a friend in need means!"

The gloom cleared away off the young fellow's face; and Thyrlé, who had given up his authority, with a smile saw him cross over to Grace, and sit down and tell her the story of his very unexpected good fortune.

To Kittie the flying hours were all too short, for Frank Brooke was by her side the whole night, and, before it was over, told the happy girl that he loved her.

What did it matter after that, though they would have to part to-morrow? They would write.

What did they think of a long, weary engagement, a long separation, and, if they should ever marry, of the poverty they must endure? Youth and happiness can afford to make light of things so fearful even as time and poverty.

Phillis, as was her fitful way, was marvelously happy when Thyrlé's arm was round her in the dance, or when now and then he whispered loving words to her—words which were to be treasured up in her heart, pondered over, wept over, she little thought for

how long. There were no more tête-à-têtes to be stolen; for part of the penalty of being a beauty, as Phillis found to her annoyance, is to be pursued by the watchful partner to come on the immediate close of every dance, and to be constantly persecuted by men wanting introductions or impossible dances. She had never objected to this kind of thing before, but now she absolutely fled from the approach of Lord Ashley, and Colonel Dynesford became an abomination to her, though they were the two stars of by far the greatest magnitude in the room.

The evening wore away, and only too soon came the hour for departure. The Manor House party had come in two carriages, and when search was made for the second one, it was discovered that Mr. Brooke and Kittie had just set off in it.

"Your brother is going to Merresford with me, Phillis, for half an hour or so," said Thyre, as he took her to the carriage. "But it will be dull for you, going home alone."

"I don't mind that in the least," she answered, quickly. "But you are not going to tell Fred anything?"

"Why in the world are you so anxious about that?" he asked, rather uneasily.

"I—I couldn't stand being laughed at about it, as I think he would."

This was a perfectly true reply, but Thyre doubted a little. Still, he answered—

"It shall be as you choose. Now, good night, dearest."

"Good night. Don't be later than one to-morrow."

He raised her hand to his lips as he leant into the carriage to say his good-bye; but, with her usual strange mixture of coquetry and shyness, she drew it away from him, almost before even his moustache touched it.

As the carriage moved, she instinctively leant forward to see him. He had glanced at the horses, which were a little restive at starting; and as he stood there, in the full glare of the bright lamps around and behind him, she thought that the symmetrical outlines of his figure, his broad brow, his thoughtful grey eyes, and firmly cut mouth and chin, were more to be admired than any other form or combination of manly beauty.

"I would trust his face by the same feelings that would make me trust old Juno's.

He has the same quiet, steadfast, unswerving look in his eyes that I have seen in dogs—and nothing is so faithful as a dog. No man, I believe, is so true and sincere as he is."

TABLE TALK.

A PROPOS of the Bengal famine, a French friend took the latter word, transposed the letters, and exclaimed—"Infame!" Did he think as well as speak; and if so, was he right in his exclamation?

M. OFFENBACH calls his new opera "La Jolie Parfumeuse." Scent—sweet savour—goodly odours of a thousand flowers—perfume—and from such a subject! Well, the music is pretty; and it is a well-known fact that those sweet scents and flavours, the ethyles, are obtained by chemistry from very nasty materials.

AT THE DULWICH athletic sports, the other day, visitors were made free of a refreshment buffet; but after partaking, were politely requested to state what they had had—rather a novelty after a display of hospitality. The representative of an influential organ took with him his wife and niece, and at the conclusion of the sports led them to the buffet, where they refreshed, and the ladies departed. Then came the polite request from an attendant: "Will you kindly say what you have had, sir?" "Had? Oh, yes. Three sausage rolls, three sandwiches, three patties, three tartlets, three glasses of ale, and three glasses of sherry." The attendant opened his mouth, thought much, and went.

TELEGRAM FROM Algiers, May 18 (Evening):—"A train arrived here to-day from Oran, six hours behind time. The rails were covered with a thick layer of grasshoppers." A lady acquaintance said it was a very good way of getting rid of them. She wishes our English railway directors would follow suit, and cover the rails with a thick layer of blackbeetles.

All Contributions are attentively considered, and unaccepted MSS. are returned on receipt of stamps for postage; but the Editor cannot hold himself responsible for any accidental loss. No unaccepted MSS. will be returned until a written application has been made for them.

ONCE A WEEK

NEW SERIES.

No. 336.

June 6, 1874.

Price 2d.

JACK'S SISTER; OR, WOMANLY PAST QUESTION.

CHAPTER XXXI.
RISEN FROM THE DEAD!



I WAS a sultry afternoon in the first week in July. The fountains in Trafalgar-square swarmed with thirsty little street Arabs, in every variety of dirt and nakedness. The Albert Memorial flashed, and danced, and glittered in the yellow sunshine, as though it were—where, indeed, it ought to be—under an Italian sky. Kensington Gardens, bright with flowers and shady with trees, still offered one green resting-place to hot and weary wayfarers; but only nursemaids and children availed themselves of its shelter, for inexorable fashion held up a warning finger, and turned back its grown-up votaries to their decreed lounge in the sun-scorched, dust-whitened park, or rather to that particular strip which—it being now the sacred hour for The Drive—was filled and choked to overflowing with people, in carriages and out of carriages, on horseback and foot, young and old, grave and gay, male and female, crossing and re-crossing in a ceaseless stream from Apsley House to Exhibition Gate; brought there by idleness, fashion, or caprice, and dawdling there the allotted time, before they dawdled away to cosy five o'clock teas, or crowded coffee-ice

“at homes,” in flower-scented boudoirs and gilded drawing-rooms.

About midway up the Row, two men leaned over the rails and watched the carriages go by; spoke to the occupants of one or two, and bowed to others. Gentlemanly, well-dressed men both; young too, and wearing the unmistakable air of fashion and good tone—the Hon. Arthur Cloughton, president of the Oxford and London Amateur Literati Society, one; Merle Kinnardson the other.

They were great friends, these two; and if the one had a thousand a year and the other only a hundred, I don't think you would have guessed as much from the appearance and manner of the latter, as he stood there, lavender-gloved and laughing, and chatted with the man who had been his chief patron and chum at Oxford; and who, having led him into most of his debts there, was leading him into more now.

“There goes my mother,” said Cloughton, dropping his glass suddenly, and turning away. “I know her piebalds a mile off. Let's make a move, Kinnardson; I don't want to be hauled in for her tea fight this afternoon. Had enough of it last Thursday, by Jove! There were about three men to talk to thirty women; and my lady gave me all the fattest ones, too—the regular old dowagers—so that I got so faint with taking them downstairs to have an ice, and faking them up again to look after their daughters, that, 'pon my honour, my man had to drench me with eau de Cologne externally, and eau de vie internally, before I could 'rise' enough to dress for dinner.”

Merle laughed.

“Poor fellow! you must have been awfully ill-used. I thought you were looking rather seedy at White's in the evening. Hallo! there goes Sir Francis Grant, riding with Leighton. What a fine old fellow he is, isn't he? Quite the pure patrician type.”

“Where? which is he?” asked Cloughton, screwing his glass into his eye again, and

staring, with the peculiar obstinacy of all short-sighted men, in precisely the wrong direction. "Don't know him by sight, and want to. Isn't he the man who has about two hundred frantic female worshippers, in the persons of the female art students at that dreary old Golgotha, the South Kensington?"

"Exactly. He is their great high priest; and very pretty some of the neophytes are. I've been there on copying days, and surprised sundry charming little faces, peering down from huge brown baize erections, or semi-hidden behind rickety easels. Don't they know how to use their eyes, too! Not repellently, by any means."

"Mem. To go some copying day, and help steady the easels," observed Cloughton, solemnly. "Why, shades of Balliol! here's another friend of ours. How do, Middlemist? Don't quite annihilate your friends, please."

For little Middlemist, trim and well-brushed as ever, the very image of an aristocratic tailor's advertisement, was running full tilt into them, when startled out of a brown study by his fellow Oxonian's exclamation.

"Cloughton!" and he shook hands cordially. "What an age thinth I've theen you. How do you do? Broiling weather, ithn't it?"

"Blistering! I say," indicating Merle with a jerk of his elbow, "here's another acquaintance of yours. Don't you see him?"

Apparently Middlemist did not—apparently he found some difficulty of recognition even now; for his neat little face became of a lively pink hue, and though he held out his hand, it was hesitatingly and with perceptible stiffness.

"I beg your pardon, Kinnardthson. Not expecting to thee you, I didn't recognithe you at firtht. How'th your couthin, Jack Leyburn?"

"Rejoicing in rampant health when I saw him last," Merle answered, gaily. "That isn't very lately, however, as I've been in town since the beginning of May. I suppose you're up for the season, like the rest of the world?"

"No. I have entered at the bar. You're not ordained yet? I gueth by your tie."

"Oh, Lord, no; and don't believe he's ever going to be," put in Cloughton, lightly. "We are going to do something better for

him than that. Want his pen here. He's not the stuff country parsons are cut out of—eh, Kinnardson?"

"Kingthely and Wilberforth to wit," observed Middlemist, his small, keen eyes fixed on Merle, who had reddened slightly under his rackety friend's encomium. "No, I don't imagine that he ith."

"Preserve me from my friends," said Merle, with a good-humour which was remarkable in a man not ordinarily renowned for that quality. "What will either of you bet that I am not in bands before Christmas? Put it high, Cloughton—you can afford to lose."

"Dignified by a dog-collar, eh?" laughed his friend. "Well, whatever you're going to do, don't let us stand grilling here all day. I think I see pretty Mrs. French's ponies down there. You know her, Kinnardson, don't you?"

"Yes, her father and mine were chums at Winchester. Come with us, Middlemist, and we'll introduce you. She's one of the jolliest little women going; and keeps A 1 in cooks."

"Thankth, no," said Middlemist, shortly—"no time."

"Dine with me, then, to-day, at the Oxford and Cambridge? They can give one a good steak there, and a fairish bottle of Madeira, if you can put up with that sort of thing."

"Thankth, can't—got another engagement."

"What day will you come, then?"

"'Pothible to thay. Never dine out at clubth. Beathly hole, that Oxford and Cambridge."

With which courteous remark, and a brief farewell—cordial to Cloughton, barely civil to Merle—Mr. Middlemist took himself off; and was speedily swamped in the seething "cream" around him.

"Ill-tempered little beast that," remarked Cloughton, coolly. "Cut out for county sessions. I wonder you were so civil to him. Was he always so?"

Merle laughed. He seldom joined in abusing any one.

"Oh, he's not half bad. It's only his way. He and my cousin are immense chums; and—I say, Cloughton, that's not Mrs. French. Her face is turned away; but look at the hair. Mrs. French's is as black as night."

Cloughton fumbled for his glass, and looked as directed.

"By Jove, you're right! I'll tell you who it is, though. It's that new actress they're making such a fuss about over at the Universe, Miss Lottie Dynevor."

"What, the beauty every one is howling about? I haven't seen her yet."

"Beauty? I believe you. A beauty without paint, and fairer off the boards than on them. Mounteagle, the manager of the Universe, found her wasting her sweetness on the desert air of the Surrey or Marylebone—one of those antediluvian places; bought her off from the cads there, and introduced her in that play they're doing up new at the Universe—that, that—what you may call it, by—"

"Thingummy?" suggested Merle, laughing. "No wonder the critics complain of your articles as vague, Cloughton. I say—one moment—by Heavens! it *can't* be!"

"What can't be?" cried the other, dropping his glass in bewilderment, and staring blankly, as Merle sprang off, trying to force a way through the gaily bedizened and outraged crowd of "swells," his eyes and his whole mind fixed on one object, the solitary occupant of the now rapidly moving pony carriage.

Unfortunately for him, the throng was particularly dense at this end of the Row; and before he could overtake the carriage sufficiently to get a second glimpse of the actress's face, she and her ponies had disappeared under the archway, and were out of sight. Baffled and disappointed, with a white perspiration on his brow, and the indignant looks of the people he had jostled around him, Merle stopped short in his headlong race, and allowed himself to be overtaken and captured by the much-agrieved Cloughton.

"Did you think I was mad?" he asked, seeing a whole volume of exclamations in his friend's face. "I really beg your pardon; but I thought I saw an old friend—a fellow I haven't seen for years."

"Did you?" said his friend, drily. "Delightful fellow that friend must be, to inspire such attachment. Now, if you hadn't told me, I should have thought you had been smitten by la belle Dynevor's pretty face, and were flying to immolate yourself under her carriage wheels."

"Hardly," and Merle laughed—"the pretty face being so turned from us that I

didn't get a glimpse of it at all. But I do mean to see it; and at leisure, if her acting is as good as her figure. At the Universe, you said?"

"Yes, and she really acts above par—puts some life and passion into her part; not the leg and comic song sort one would expect from the Surrey. If you're not engaged to-night, I'd advise you to go. I'm dining out, unfortunately."

"Thanks. I will if I can. Are you going to stay here any longer? I've an engagement for five, so must bolt at once. Good-bye."

"Ta, ta. Don't lose your heart to little Dynevor; for you'll have plenty of rivals, and heavily weighted ones."

They had just reached Hyde Park Corner, and while young Cloughton turned back to the Row, where a couple of lady friends were vainly trying to attract his blindest eye from the back seat of their comfortable harouche, Merle hurried off down Piccadilly, his head still dizzy from the late shock to his nerves, even though every step made him more inclined to laugh at the folly of such an idea, and endeavour to put it aside as unworthy a second thought.

Like *her*! Why, even if it were so, might there not be dozens of persons like her? You saw accidental resemblances by the score, every day of your life, and this—Why, good heavens! he had not even seen the face, except for one half-second, when she turned the ponies' heads. The notion was too absurdly far-fetched to hold water for a moment—too absurd to be worth remembering; and yet he *would* go to the theatre that very evening, if only to laugh at it and his own romantic imaginings. Would to God, indeed, that they had one grain of foundation! Middlemist's pointedly uncivil bearing would not need to sting and humble him then; and, by the way, what could have led Middlemist, who had been himself the accused culprit, to suspect him from the first?

He went straight home to his lodgings, and dressed for the evening. The engagement had only been a pretence, suggested by the desire for solitude; and when he was ready, and had looked at his watch, and seen that it still wanted twenty minutes to six, he got out his desk, unfastened a little secret drawer, and, having first turned the key in the room door, drew out, very slowly and carefully, a small packet, sealed up and endorsed with the mem.—"M. B. To be

burnt, unopened, at my death." Having all papers belonging to him neatly arranged, classified, and docketed was one of Merle's peculiarities. Not a bad one, either, for your own convenience *during* life; but, as far as my experience goes, rather tending to defeat its object after death.

His fingers shook now, as he broke the seals; and there was a grey, hushed look in his face, like that of one raising a coffin lid and knowing that his gaze will fall upon the clay cold features of the lately dead within; nevertheless, he did break them, and untying the little packet of letters inside, selected one envelope from the rest, and taking a photograph out of it, held it up to the light.

Only for a moment. It was just a bad, blurred portrait of a girl, in an ill-fitting gown, which made her shoulders high and her waist thick; a girl with hair stuffed out over two huge and hideous rolls (how well he remembered scolding her for altering it from its usual crop of bright, sunny curls!)—one of the most disappointing efforts of a disappointing art, and so unlike the original that he had made her be taken again by the best photographer in Oxford, and had forgotten the existence of this unlucky carte, till, on making a careful collection of everything connected with her after her disappearance and death, he had found it between the leaves of an old pocket-book; and (with what intention, God knows!) had locked it away, with her letters, in a secret drawer of his desk.

Poor Minnie! Even this wretched copy of that bright, responsive little face brought back such a tide of remorseful pain now, that he laid it down almost immediately, and covered his eyes with his hands. What would he not have given to have blotted out that one memory—which, to freethinking dogs like Arthur Cloughton and others, would have been cast to the winds long since, and forgotten utterly behind a list of far more culpable affairs. He had been in more culpable affairs since then, and had forgotten them; while this one unfortunate flirtation—nothing more, remember—hung round his neck like a millstone, and rendered abortive all Enid's influence and efforts to make him a better and a happier man.

Of a surety, that individual who is cursed with a sensitive conscience, without having strength of mind or principle to satisfy it, needs no houndings from virtuous society;

for he carries his own hell with him at every step, and suffers the tortures of the lost at every sin. Merle spoke truth when he said that even Enid's love and sympathy were not enough for him. He needed her living presence to lift him above the sneers of his own conscience, the reproaches of a morbid memory, and the temptings of a morbid mind.

The clock struck six; and, after carefully tying up and sealing the packet again, Merle locked it in his desk, and, taking his hat, sallied forth to get some dinner at the club. Whether the steak was good that day, or the reverse, neither he nor I could tell you. I don't think he had the faintest idea of what he was eating, but devoured mechanically, keeping away thought by reading the *Saturday's* critiques between mouthfuls; and starting off for the Universe as soon as the theatre doors were likely to be open. He felt better now, and more inclined to laugh at the fancy he was following than before. Probably, having taken double his usual allowance of wine had something to do with the feeling. Anyhow, when he reached the theatre, and found the doors only just open, and himself one of an audience ranging from four to six in number, he felt inclined to launch sundry anathemas at his own ridiculous imaginings; and go home again.

Something—fate if you will, an evil fate for him—decided otherwise, and he took his seat in one of the stalls farthest from the stage. It was not his choice, but the front ones were all engaged beforehand.

"A taking piece, you see, sir," the man in the box-office had said, "and a new actress. There's no one this season has took like Miss Dynevor. There wasn't a seat to be got, not for love or money, after the curtain drew up last night, sir."

Have you ever had the misfortune to go to the theatre too early? If so, I think you will agree with me that it is, without exception, the dreariest scene in which you ever wasted a dreary half-hour. The gas is only turned on enough to make a darkness visible; the doors of boxes and lobbies alike are swinging open, and letting in draughts innumerable from every imaginable corner. The gilding looks black, the velvet dusty, the orchestra an empty wild beast den, the boxes and dress circle a South American Campo Santo, only waiting for the bodies. And then, when the dingy inhabitants of the wild beast den do troop in, and begin that interminable

and ear-maddening "skreaking," droning, and whining popularly known as tuning their instruments, and which it seems indispensable to perform in public—when a stream of roughs, male and female, come tramping, stamping, and shouting into the gallery, and begin to while away the time by aiming bits of orange peel at the back parting of your hair—when, every time that you have succeeded in banishing these annoyances in an interesting article in your paper, you are requested to get up and make room for some porpoise-like dowager, or assist the transit of an elderly young lady, with so much violet powder on the rosy points of her elbows that she leaves white marks on your coat in passing, looking as though you had been tattooed for the evening, or as if some illiterate beer boozier had used you for a slate to cast up his public-house score upon; then, indeed, do you feel inclined to regard theatres and theatre-going as a delusion and a snare, and to exclaim with the preacher, "This too is vanity!"

The curtain rose at last; not for the drama in which Miss Dynevor was to appear, but for the usual infliction in the shape of a preliminary farce, which being compounded as usual out of utter rubbish, acted as usual by the dregs of the company, and witnessed by the small number who come early because they want to avoid a crush, or to see as much as they can for their money, or to patronize some actor in whom they take a personal interest, was almost as dreary to Merle (a professed epicure in his enjoyments) as the previous waiting had been. He sat through it patiently, saw the orthodox amount of kissing and scolding, knocking down, banging of doors, and other pantomime-like exercises, and uttered a fervent "Thank God" when the curtain fell at last upon smart soubrette, injured husband, and giggling lovers. Almost at the same moment, a rush of people arrived, anxious to lose no part of the successful drama; stalls and boxes filled, as if by magic, with opera-cloaked damsels, white-fronted squires, and be-jewelled mammas; the orchestra began to play a slow and plaintive melody, suggestive of something more telling to come; and in the eager excitement of watching for the curtain to rise, Merle did not notice three people—two ladies, very quietly dressed, and a gentleman, small and pretty featured, with sharp eyes and an almost wax doll trimness of appearance—who

came in last, and took reserved seats in the front row of the dress circle, immediately looking down on him.

The play was a well-known one of Sheridan's, recently revived, and got up to suit the requirements of the modern stage, with so much brilliancy and success that, even without Miss Dynevor's charms, it would have been *the* drama of the season. As it was, she added such an amount of living fire and interest to it, that, during the early part of the first act, where the heroine does not appear, society played with its opera glasses and waited, disregarding of the more than excellent cast exerting themselves with thankless energy for their edification, till the Dynevor's appearance should give the required spur to their capricious interest.

The right moment arrived, and she gave it. A folding door opened, a page entered, carrying muff, lap-dog, and cushion; and behind him came a woman, young and slender, before whom the whole house seemed to rise en masse, amid such a roar of clapping, stamping, and repetitions of the one word "Dynevor! Dynevor!" that for some seconds the actress had enough to do in acknowledging the welcome accorded her by repeated bowings of her small, powdered head, and sweepings of the graceful, sinuous figure.

Merle did not even see her face!

When people in front stalls will rise, a small man at the back will be at a disadvantage; and even when the excitement was over, and she had settled to her part, he found her face turned from him, so that he could see nothing but the peach-like curve of cheek and chin; and a willowy form, slighter and taller than that imprinted on his memory, in no wise resembling that hideous photograph, bending with perfect grace over a letter which she was reading. And yet somehow, in some mysterious way, neither due to face nor figure—least of all to dress, which was of the sacque and stomacher era—recalling that buried flower of his youth with an almost sickening sense of tantalizing uncertainty.

It did not last long. The letter was from a lover, the villain of the piece; and whose villainy—already divined by the heroine—is confirmed by a scrap of paper accidentally inserted in the envelope containing his proposals. He himself is announced almost before his would-be mistress has finished perusing his letter; and as, in answer to his

rapturous greeting, she turned slowly round, the full flare of the gaslights on her beautiful face—contempt, almost loathing, written in every delicate curve and line, flashing like wildfire in the brilliant eyes, and even quivering in the white and rigid little hand in which, without one spoken word, she tendered the two papers to his mortified clutch—Merle rose to his feet for one moment, a half-uttered cry trembling on his lips.

It was Minnie Bruce—Minnie, and no other, alive and in the flesh!

THE CASUAL OBSERVER.

WITH THE CASUALS—DICKENS ON CANVAS.

NIGHT: a bitter cold night. There is a fire in the chilly, whitewashed office, with its cold-looking desks; but the place is so well ventilated that small, keen, sharp winds—evidently offsprings brought to town by old Boreas, who is prowling about the streets—have dodged in and out, hunting one another about the dreary place. Their artfulness is surprising, and they seem to act in combination. One takes my attention by getting up my leg; and stooping to arrange myself more comfortably, two drive at me—one going like a razor down the nape of my neck, while the other stirs my hair and whistles in my ear. I go to the fireside—wh-o-o-o-hoop! they are whistling in the chimney; and the stiff-looking man present says it is a draughty place.

I agree with him, and wait, after giving one or two impatient glances at my watch.

At last business is to begin; for a keen-eyed inspector of police walks in, takes his seat at a desk, gives an order to number something, and number something opens a short gate to allow a stream of very dirty humanity to trickle in.

Hearts are curious things. Here am I, an old blasé, battered Londoner, who has been nearly everywhere, and seen most things, and yet that stupid heart of mine, well cased in its natural coverings, made warmer by its share of the good things of this life, and covered with a warm great coat, gives a sort of jump, as if inciting a sob, as soon as the eye has telegraphed to it the misery it sees.

A short time since, I know that those before me were standing where they could see carriages roll up, well-dressed people alight, and bright, eager faces shining in the glare of the gaslight from the great temple

of pleasure close by; while here, face after face bears that pinched, wolfish look that hunger alone can give.

There is a sharp, imperious, businesslike air about that uniformed inspector, as he opens a book before him, and glances along the row of shivering objects. His voice, too, is very loud, and it seems at first harsh; but as the interview goes on, one gets to think better of it.

"Now, then, stand back there! The women first. Here, you!"

A very thinly clad, middle-aged woman steps forward, the first applicant for casual relief—a night's lodging; and the following questions are asked her:—

Age?

Parish?

Where she slept last night?

Where she is going?

Answers entered in a form, and the inspector leans out and gives her a ticket, which secures her a night's lodging, with something to eat, at the workhouse of St. Mary-le-Strand.

Her answers seemed satisfactory. She is a decent-looking woman, whose hands show tokens of very hard work, her finger displaying a very time-battered wedding ring.

A very shabby-looking little woman follows, and she gets her ticket, though the inspector shakes his head at her.

"You've been here before," he says, grimly.

"No, sir; I declare to goodness I—"

"What?"

The woman stops short, and there is a lurking smile about the corners of her mouth, and a twinkle in her eye. She is not a bit abashed at being found out; and, but for the bitter night, she would possibly have had her ticket for quite another workhouse.

Several more women, all old and middle-aged; and they take their tickets, and go marching away.

"Can't be hard on them to-night," the inspector says to me, with a half-smile.

I nod acquiescence, and the work goes on.

Now comes one who says he is a stableman out of work. He looks it; answers his questioner quietly and firmly; takes his ticket, and goes.

Another man comes forward.

"What are you?"

"Bricklayer, sir."

And the big, well-nurtured fellow gives himself a hitch, and looks shifty, glances sharply from one to the other; and if eyes ever do speak, his said, quite plainly, as they rested on me, "Who's that bloke?"

"Show me your hands," says the inspector.

The man somewhat unwillingly holds out a pair of dirty, soft-skinned hands that have probably never touched brick or trowel in their existence.

"Stand back," says the inspector.

And our friend literally goes to the wall. His tale is not believed.

"Next," says the policeman; and a tall, well-built fellow comes up to the desk, and answers the questions put.

"You've been a soldier?" says the inspector sharply.

"No, sir, a sailor—navy. We're drilled aboard ship."

His tale is probable; and his ticket is made out, and he goes.

A very miserable-looking object the next, a very waif of the streets.

"You were here only the other night," says the inspector, shaking his head.

"I were, sir; but things have been werry bad lately. I only took thruppence 'apeny to-day."

"Give him his ticket."

The order is made out, and the poor fellow goes on his way rejoicing.

Then follow a couple of dozen pitiable objects—some evidently broken down respectability, some genuine travellers seeking a night's rest before continuing their journey the next day; others working men come up to seek for a job in the big city, driven here by the slackness of trade in the country. Paddy is there twice over, and he speaks in a high-pitched voice as, in one instance, he says his parish is Killar-r-ney, and that he is going to Cork.

Gone to the dogs is the verdict one naturally gives for some who creep in, apparently content in their misery, and looking not a step beyond the present. But every now and then a great hulking ruffian is told to stand back; so that, when a goodly number have received their tickets for St. Mary-le-Strand, about a dozen men remain behind.

"Make out their tickets for St. Giles's," says the inspector to his sub; and there is a shuffling of feet, and three-parts of the fel-

lows shuffle off, grinning and nudging one another till they are in the street.

Naturally asking for an explanation, I am told that these gentlemen would have gone to St. Mary's; but that they object to St. Giles's, because there they are expected to earn the lodging and food bestowed upon them, and they have a natural antipathy to work. From old experience, many of the patrons of the casual ward have got to know which are the most comfortable work-houses in the kingdom, and they arrange their visits accordingly. For instance, Kingston is a favourite spot, and its casual hotel finds plenty of visitors.

The harsh, businesslike tone of the inspector seemed to pass off as the business went on, and I could not but notice how his keen eye seemed to class the applicants, separating the lounging members of the dangerous classes from the helpless and unfortunate, and treating them accordingly, these latter even with a degree of consideration that was hardly to be expected; and it was after being present at this genuine scene, as the tickets were given to the casuals at Bow-street, that I gazed on a similar collection of waifs and strays.

This too was on a cold and bitter night, and the applicants for relief were outside, waiting, with their shoulders to the wall of the police station, for their turn to enter and solicit casual relief.

The snow lay thinly upon the pave—here grey, there trampled and muddy. The gas lamp shone with a pale, sickly light through the weird, grey atmosphere, and a stray snow-flake or two fell slowly still, as if reluctant to smirch its purity with the foulness of the filthy street.

God, what a group! "Dumb, wet, silent horrors. Sphinxes set up against that dead wall, and no one likely to be at the pains of solving them until the general overthrow." There, side by side, the miserable, the unfortunate, the luckless, and the preys upon their kind. A central figure, an old toper, legs far apart, hat on one side, coat tightly buttoned, hands far down in pockets, and an aspect of semi-drunken content upon his face.

Close by, a group—father, mother, children—whose genuine poverty was patent at a glance. Mother holding one little one by the hand, while another child placed its arm protectively around it; the father holding another pitiful pinched one in his arms

in the kindly, clumsy way in which a man would hold a child; and the others sheltered between them, as, turning together face towards face, they seemed to try even there, in the bitter, snowy street, to form a home and shelter for all they had on earth.

Again a group: a lank, thin youth of two or three and twenty, a very shadow, drinking in the utterances of a couple of scamps—mendicants, thieves, sham soldiers, with scoundrel written in every feature, and fingers itching to be laid on all that could come within their reach.

Beneath the lamp, a tightly-buttoned-up traveller with his bundle. He had just obtained his ticket, and the policeman at the station door pointed the way to the casual ward; while just in front stood one whose shabby mourning told its own tale: husbandless, with two children, and come to this. No more appealing group could be presented to a feeling heart than that of this poor widow, young, with traces of beauty half eclipsed by misery; footsore, wet, dragged, despairing; one little one clasped tightly in her arms, the other, a year or two older, clinging to her dress, and trotting through the snowy mire. Too numbed and blue with the cold even to cry, there was that in the little thing's aspect that would have sent a spasm of pain through the heart of any one who had ever heard child lips lisp to him the great word "father."

Bound, this group, for the casual ward, to obtain shelter, rest, and such warmth as they could for the night; and for the morrow—who knows? To look at them, it seemed as if the kindest fate that could befall them would have been that they might have lain down and slept—slept the great sleep from which there is no awaking here; for, to judge from appearances, the morrow would be but a repetition of the present day, a cold, dreary dragging on of a hopeless existence, without a gleam to lighten the dreary way.

Gazing on the scene, the cold chill of the weird, misty night seemed to enter even into the bones; while the colder, more piercing chill of the misery on every side entered to the very marrow and the brain. That such a scene could be possible here in Christian England, where we lavish our thousands to fête a foreign potentate, where the riches of the whole world are poured into our overflowing garners, and wealth in every form flaunts in the face of every one

who pass down the streets!—here, in a country where millions have been contributed to missionary enterprise, and money is ready to be poured out lavishly by thousands of kindly hands, did the owners of those hands but know where misery hid her gaunt and hungry face! There are, we know, the Jellybys and Pardiggles of the generation, who look far over the heads of our home misery, maybe into distant Africa, or who do their good in so hard and hurtful a way, in their visits to the poor, that that good becomes almost an evil; but there are also, thank Heaven, thousands upon thousands in whom the true spirit of charity dwelleth, and who are ever ready—some with their widow's mite, some with their thousand pound cheques, given in secrecy and silence to a suffering cause—to some institution where good is done quietly and unostentatiously year after year, even as in that home of the little rescued lambs at Wanstead. Trickery is rife, imposture is prevalent, and the good and charitably gentle are often cheated by the plausible; but misery calls softly—aye, almost in silence—speaks but with eloquent, imploring eyes, and the help that would be abundantly given were the want but known, comes sometimes too late; and we read in some inquest, each a foul stain upon our history, how some poor creature, "who had known better days," literally starved to death—dying at last within a stone's throw of wealth.

Sphinxes, indeed, and hard to solve the riddle of these terrible lives. Utterly vile and irreclaimable, some. Now, *now*! But what of twenty years back, when the clay was soft and plastic? What of their lives? Who can tell of temptation, starvation, misery, endured year after year, before the poor wretch before us here drifted down to this? There is the leaven of the vicious and villainous, but for how much of that vice and villainy is society itself answerable? Judgment is an awful responsibility here.

But these—this widow and her offspring—children such as He might have taken upon His knees, and blessed, and said, "Suffer them to come unto me, and forbid them not"—this is true misery—this labourer and his family, with the mother shading her eyes as if to shut out the wretchedness around. Can nothing better be done for these than that they must herd with the scoundrel and horrors of our streets? Strange

thoughts will arise as we gaze upon the misery of the scene, shivering and pinched at heart with its pitiful—wondrous pitiful—aspects. One dreams of a paternal Government providing such means that there shall be work to be had, and simple, life-preserving wage, for all who will toil—the labour suited to the needs of the one who asks: needle-work for the starving mother, and with it warmth and shelter; trades' work for the mechanic; work with spade or pick for the labourer; and, with a clever administration, this might be almost self-supporting, and in connection with the unions throughout the land.

Is the scheme too Utopian? Surely not—but wiser heads must judge; though they must own that such an institution, enabling every willing hand to temporarily earn its bread under Governmental auspices, would be the grandest monument of progress that ever was raised in a Christian land.

And these shivering wretches here before us? They would not exist, save as mitching, malingering scum; and as for them—well, speaking casually, there is the casual ward.

"You should never give money indiscriminately in the street," says a very good friend; "you may be imposed upon."

Very likely; but then you may help a starving soul. For our part, we do give indiscriminately in the street—not much, only coppers; and if there is a pleasure, it is to buy of your pavement tradesman, who is always at hand struggling for a living with something ingenious and new. Your Casual Observer is afraid he is guilty here. He spoiled one pocket with the wax of a jumping frog—no connection with Mark Twain's. He purchased the Punch squeaker, and could not use it. He bought the little nigger that should have shrilled when its legs were pulled, but did not. He—hold, enough, this is not the confessional, and a pitiful scene is before us still.

The above thoughts were suggested, though, by the shivering sight before us, and one's hand stole naturally to that, alas! too often empty pocket, when the vision did not dissolve: it was still there, but the day dream it evoked passed away as the voice of the artist answered the question put by a friend. For—real in being a copy of reality—this latter was not as the Bow-street scene, since your Casual Observer was seated in the studio of Mr. S. L. Fildes, gazing at his picture upon the easel before it was sent in

to the Academy, before its fate was known—that it was to be No. 504, and hung on the line; before, too, that it was sold. But your Observer felt then and said that here was a great picture, a pitiful picture—one that should appeal to the heart of every thoughtful man and woman in the land. It was suggested then that it should be called "Dickens on Canvas"—a most appropriate title, though it might have been called "Misery's Appeal." Mr. Fildes has given us here, in all its life-like horrors, a scene that should dwell in every memory, and leave its influence on the future of our poor; for he has painted a great picture, one whose pity-stirring figures go home to the heart, even as did the words of that tear-gemmed lay written by one Thomas Hood.

ANGUISH IN PRINT.

IN THE STRICTEST CONFIDENCE.

TEAR THE SEVENTEENTH.

TEDIUM.

IT was such a relief to know that the Signor was gone, and that, too, without betraying any one. I could see, too, that Achille revived, now that he felt that he was safe for the present, and redoubled his attentions to Mrs. Blunt. I declare I believe he would have stood there holding her for an hour, and she letting him, if Miss Furness had not very officiously lent her aid as well; when the lady principal grew better at once, and allowed herself to be assisted into the breakfast-room, where, after much pressing, she consented to partake of a glass of sherry.

"Oh, Monsieur Achille," she gasped, "such a serious matter—reputation of my establishment! You will be silent? Oh, dear me, what a dreadful upset."

"Silent? Ma foi, oui, Madame Bloont. I will be close as box," and he gave his shoulders a shrug, put his fingers to his lips, half-shut his eyes, and nodded his head a great many times over.

"I knew you would," murmured Mrs. Blunt; "and as to my lady assistants, I feel assured that I can depend upon them."

"Oh, yes," said all these, in chorus.

"And you had better now return to the class-room, Miss Bozerne," said Miss Furness, who had seemed in a fidget ever since I had followed them into the place.

"Ah, yes—please leave us now, Miss Bozerne," said Mrs. Blunt. "Of course we can depend upon you, my child?"

I promised all they wished, and was going across the hall, when I met James, with a piece of paper in his hand.

"Please, miss, where's Monsieur Cosh-eney?—a boy just brought this for him."

"I'll take it in to him," I said, with the blood seeming to run in a torrent to my heart; and there I stood, with the piece of a leaf of a pocket-book in my hand. It was not doubled up, and as I glanced down upon it I could see that it was scribbled over, evidently hastily, in pencil. I was about to carry it into the breakfast-room, when a word caught my eye; and telling myself it was not dishonourable, and that I had some right to know the secrets of Achilles, I felt that I must read it through.

"He says that I am his own, so that I have a right to see his correspondence," I said to myself, trying to find an excuse for the deceitful act; and then, trembling all over, I read, hastily scrawled—

"MONSIEUR—Vous m'avez insulté affreusement. Si vous n'êtes pas poltrone, vous serez, sans ami, dans les prairies au moulin à une heure.

"GIULIO FAZZOLETTO."

"Oh, horror!" I ejaculated, "it is a challenge; and if I give it to him, that horrid Italian will shoot or stab to death my poor Achilles! What shall I do—what shall I do?"

And there I stood, racked with anguish, till I heard footsteps approaching, when I fled into the school-room, where there was such a noise, and all the pupils flocked round me directly, to ask no end of questions; but I was so agitated that I could not speak. However, the first thing I did was to spitefully bite the wicked, murderous note into fragments, and scatter them about the place; and then, recalling Mrs. Blunt's last words, I was so retentive of the information the girls were so eager to acquire, that they one and all sided against me, and said I was "a proud, stuck-up, deceitful crocodile."

"I don't care, children," I said, haughtily—for I was more at ease now that I knew he would not get the note—"I don't care, children, Mrs. Blunt said that I was not to talk about it."

"Children, indeed!" exclaimed little pert

Celia Blang—"why, that's the very thing that would make you tell us all! 'Tisn't that; it's because you are so stuck-up, you and Clara Fitzzy; but she's shut up now, and is going to be sent away, and a good thing too; and now you'll only have Patty Fatty to talk to, and I hope you'll like it."

"Hold your tongue, you pert, ill-natured thing," I said; "I don't believe that she will be sent away."

"She will, though," said Celia; "you see if she don't. But we don't want you to tell us anything—we know all about it, don't we, girls?"

"Know all about what?" I said, very coolly and contemptuously—for they all seemed so girlish and childish to me, now that I was the repository of all that secrecy.

"Why all about it," said Celia—"about Ann, and some one at the window. Sarah told me, and ever so much more that she heard from Ann before she went; and Ann was a-going to tell her something about some one in the garden—Clara Fitzzy, or some one else—only she had not time before they bundled her off. But, there, I sha'n't tell you any more."

My ears tingled, as they say, when I heard that latter part about the garden. What an escape it seemed, to be sure! But I passed it all off, and took not a mite of notice; and just then, who should come in but Miss Furness, while I heard a well-known step go crunching along the gravel. Then it was lessons, lessons, till dinner-time; and lessons, lessons, till tea-time; and then lessons again, for the weather was too wet for a walk.

I only saw Clara of a night after that, and, poor thing, she was kept upon prison fare; for a letter came down from Lady Fitzacre, saying that she was too ill to travel at present, and that she left the punishment of the foolish, disobedient child entirely in the hands of Mrs. Blunt; and so there wasn't a word said more about expelling her, for Mrs. Blunt was too fond of the high terms and extras she was able to charge for parlour boarders. But they kept the poor thing a close prisoner upstairs for a week; and, to make her position more bearable, I bought her the cheap edition of "Frank Fairleigh," and smuggled it up. Then I managed "Harry Coverdale;" and whenever I went out, and could get to the pastrycook's, I filled my pockets full of queen cakes, and

sausage rolls, and raspberry jam tarts, and got the inside of the pocket of my silk dress in such a sticky mess, that I declare every time I put my hand in, it made me think of the poor Signor.

Of course, I told Clara everything that happened downstairs as soon as Patty was asleep, though she frightened me terribly by almost going into hysterics the first night, when I told her about the Signor being in the store-room; but I did not mention the jam, then, for fear of hurting her feelings. She said I did quite right about the note; for she said she could never have been happy again if the Signor had killed Achille—just as if Achille was not a deal more likely to have killed the Signor!

I don't know how the maids knew, but Sarah told us that the Signor had quite left the place, and had not paid his lodging nor yet his washing bill; though I don't want to be spiteful, but I don't think that last could have been much, for I never caught sight of anything washable but a tiny bit of turn-down collar. And Sarah knew—for James told her that he took the packet—that Mrs. Blunt sent what salary was owing to him the same day, while I afterwards learned from Achille that they never met again; and really it was a very good thing that the poor man went, for all parties concerned. Yes! No! Let me see—yes, he told me upon the day I enclosed him the half-sovereign for the poor refugee family whose troubles in London Achille used to paint so vividly. Achille was very charitable, and kept himself very poor that way; but I could not help admiring his generosity towards his fellow exiles, and I used to give him, regularly, all I could from my pocket-money, after he had called my attention to these poor people's condition; and I must say that papa was very liberal to me in that way, and I could always have a sovereign or two for the asking. Achille used to tell me that he added all he could, and that the poor people were so grateful, and used to write of me to him as "*la belle ange*." He said that the mother was going to write and thank me some day, but she never did; while, I suppose from motives of delicacy, Achille never told me their names.

He was really exceedingly charitable, and was often finding out cases where a little money would be well bestowed; and once or twice I wanted to call myself, and see the poor creatures; but his diffidence was so

great, that he would not tell me of their places of abode, for he would not be seen moving in such matters, preferring to perform his acts of kindness in secret.

As for Clara, she would never help me a bit when her punishment was relaxed, and she was down and amongst us once more; while, as I before said, there was no more talk of her being expelled, for since the Signor had gone, Mrs. Blunt thought that all would be right, and she would have no more trouble. But for a long time Clara would never help me a bit in any way, now that she had lost her Giulio, but moped terribly, and seemed quite an altered girl—even going so far as to say bitter, cruel things. One day she quite upset me by declaring that Achille only wanted the money for himself, and that I had better be like her—give up all such folly and love-making: a most cruel, unjust, sour-grapey speech; while as to giving up her black-bearded, Italian-organ looking man, there was little giving up in the case.

At last, down came Lady Fitzacre, and there was such a to-do in the drawing-room; but Clara was so penitent that she was quite forgiven. And then I was had in to be introduced, and of course I expected that a lady with such a name would take after her daughter, or that her daughter took after her—it don't matter which—and be tall, aristocratic, and imposing; but instead, she was a little, screwy, pale, squeezey body, with her upper teeth sticking out quite forward, so as to make her look so ugly. But she was very pleasant and good-tempered, and made quite a fuss over me, and told Mrs. Blunt that she would sooner keep a powder magazine than have a troop of such man-killers to manage.

Now, of course, I was not going to break with Achille just because there were obstacles thrown in our way; for, of course, there were no more meetings to be held in the conservatory, and for a long, a very long time, we had to be content with notes, and they could not always be delivered. As I said before, Clara would not help me a bit. She said she had promised her mamma that she would not engage in anything of the kind again, and she did not mean to break her word. Certainly, she said she might perhaps come with me some night, or perhaps help me a little; but it would not be at present, until she had quite got over her late shock. And then the stupid, romantic girl used to

talk about her heart being a desert, and ask all sorts of questions about the convent at Guisnes, just as if she had serious thoughts of entering, and turning nun altogether; for she said there seemed no hope for her in the future.

Well, there certainly was not much temptation for her to break her word to her mamma with the new Italian master, Signor R my Fasollasido—almost the same name as Fazzoletto—and when the girls called him so from old custom, he used to be most terribly annoyed. But of all the frights—oh, dear me! A great, overgrown, snuffy, fat pig; and instead of being dark-eyed, and with beautiful, glossy, black hair, he was actually quite sandy—bird sandy—and very bald-headed; while his face, where the beautiful, silky, black beard should have been, was all close shaved, and soapy and shiny. And then, too, he used to take such lots of snuff; and there was a crinkly little hole in his upper lip, where he could not shave, and this was always half full of brown powder, so that we used to call it the reservoir; while, when he breathed, you used to see the snuff puff out of the place in little tiny, tiny clouds, and fall in a brown bloom over his closely shaven face. Not much fear of any of the pupils taking a fancy to him, you would have thought; though I declare if Patty Smith did not say that he was a very nice young man. But not that that meant anything, for the highest love to which Patty could ascend was love for something nice to eat.

Actually, two months had passed since we had had an interview, and not one plan could I hit upon, though I had tortured my poor head until I grew quite desperate. Of course, I saw him every week for lessons, and then on Sundays. But, then, all that seemed to count for nothing; and once more I was beginning to grow so miserable and dejected, a state from which his letters hardly seemed to revive me. Any disloyal thoughts I may have had were thoroughly chased away by the difficulties we had encountered. But, still, living such a quiet, regular life as we lived, it seemed such hard work to find words and remarks with which to fill up one's notes. I declare that if they did not grow to be as difficult to write as Miss Furness's essays; and I had to use the same adjectives over and over and over again, till I was quite ashamed of them, and almost wondered that they did not turn

sour, even though they were meant to be sweet and endearing. While as for Achille's notes—heigho! I could excuse him, knowing how difficult it was to find words myself; but towards the latter part of our dear intimacy, his notes grew to be either political, or else full of the sorrows of the poor people whose cause he espoused, and whose sufferings he tried, to use his own expressive words, "to make a little softer." It was too bad to gape, and keep his notes in one's pocket until they grew quite worn before I opened them, and then to feel that I knew by heart all that he was going to say; but I could not help it, though I tried hard to love and appreciate the things which interested him, and pinched myself terribly to send him half-sovereigns for his "chers pauvres." But, I don't mind owning to it, I did not care a single button or pen nib for the French liberties, in spite of all my painstaking—in fact, in spite of his rather Roman nose, I always thought Louis Napoleon nice, and clever, and admirable; though poor Achille would have been horribly shocked to have heard of such a thing. I could not help it, I did try, and no doubt in time I should have grown to have loved the same things as he did; but I did wish that he would have made his notes a little more—more—well, what shall I say?—there, less matter of fact and worldly, when I wanted them to be tender, and sympathizing, and ethereal.

Yes—I grew quite disgusted, in spite of Clara's nasty badinage; for she had quite recovered her spirits as I lost mine, and used to tell me to try her recipe, and I should soon be well again. But of course I treated her remarks as they deserved; and grew paler every day in spite of the pleasant country walks, though they were totally spoiled by our having to tramp along like a regiment of soldiers. For my part, I should have liked to go wandering through the woods, spending ten minutes here and ten minutes there; now stopping to pluck a flower, and now to sit down upon some mossy fallen tree; or else to have lost myself amongst the embowering leaves. In short, I should have liked to do just as I pleased; while all the time the rule seemed to be that we should do just as some one else liked; and "some one else" was generally that detestable, screwy, old Miss Furness, with her "Keep together, young ladies," or "Now, a little faster," or "Straightforward," or "To the right."



Oh! it was so sickening, I declare that I would rather have sat up in the dormitory—pooh, such nonsense!—in the bed-room, and watched and envied the birds in the long, wavy boughs of the beautiful cedars. I know I could have contrived several meetings if it had not been for Miss Furness, who was always prying and peering about, as suspiciously as possible, though half of that was on purpose to annoy me, and because she knew that I did not like it.

But though Clara had at one time vowed that she would not help me, she never, in the slightest degree, went against any of my plans; but even went so far as to allow herself to be turned into a passive post-office—if I may use the expression—by holding a note for Achille in her French grammar, and bringing back another when she had had her regular scolding—for she certainly was very stupid over her French, though at one time she had manifested considerable ability over her Italian, while she sketched beautifully.

I managed the place for a meeting, at last; though, after all, it was but a very tiresome place, but, under the circumstances, better than nothing. There was no going out of a night now, even if we had felt so inclined; and, really and truly, after what we had gone through, I felt very little disposed to attempt such a thing again; while Miss Furness used to collect regularly every night all the downstairs keys in a basket, and then take them up to Mrs. Blunt's room; and I feel convinced that those four old tabbies used to have something hot in one of the bed-rooms. Clara used to say that she could smell it; and yet they used to make a fuss at dinner about never touching ale or porter. All I know is, that Miss Furness's nose never would have looked so red if she only drank water always. They used to think that we did not know of their sitting up of a night; but Clara and I soon found that out, for we used to lie and listen, and could tell well enough that the Fraulein was not in her own room; while every now and then, from some other part, we could hear her blowing her nose with a noise loud enough to alarm the whole house. There never was such a woman before for blowing noses, I'm sure. Why, she could blow her nose as loud as a churchwarden, or a Poor Law guardian, who, as it is well known, can, after county magistrates on the bench, make more noise than any one upon that

particular organ. It was quite dreadful to hear the Fraulein trumpeting about, like one of those horrid brass things the soldiers play in the bands—stretching out, and pulling in, and working about, and looking so horribly dangerous.

And now I am going to tell you about my plan for an interview; though I might have spared my poor brains all the trouble, for it never did either of us a bit of good, in spite of all my scheming and management. I told you that the downstairs doors were always locked now of a night, and that Miss Furness collected all the keys, so that it was quite out of the question to think of trying to get into either of the lower rooms to talk out of the window; so I thought, and thought, and thought, and puzzled, and puzzled, and puzzled, and bored my poor brains, till at last I remembered the empty room at the end of the passage.

"Well, but how ever could he get up there to talk to you?" said Clara; "it's a second floor window."

"Why, come up a ladder, of course," I said.

"But how is he to get one there?" said Clara. "Bring some bricklayers and scaffold poles, and have a scaffold made on purpose?"

And she said it in that nasty teasing way of hers.

"Why, a rope ladder, goosey," I said. "Don't you see?"

But Clara said she could not see, and that she believed that, excepting in ships, there were no such things as rope ladders, and all those that you read of in books were manufactured in people's brains, and never helped anybody yet up to a window; while as to ladies eloping down them, that was all nonsense, for she did not think the woman was living who could get either up or down one of the swingle-swangle things. And then she said that it would not be safe; but I knew better, and told her so, for I was not going to have my plan set aside for a trifle; and then I set to and wrote a letter to Achille, telling him the whole plan; for since Clara had laughed so, I had not liked to send money in the notes by her; and poor Achille had sent me such a despairing letter, telling me how that he must see me, while this time his was one of the most despairing, broken-hearted notes possible. I declare I don't know what he did not say he would do if he could not see me soon.

BULLIONDUST'S SECRETARY.

CHAPTER I.

MR. BULLIONDUST is a successful contractor. He has troused the *all* mighty dollar. He has chiselled confiding corporations, and put his dirty, fat forefinger (metaphorically speaking) into the eyes of a considerable number of members of the Institute of Civil Engineers. He is a self-made man—boasts of the fact, glories in it, pokes you in the ribs, and generally assaults you with it. Of him the story is told—

"I am a self-made man," says Bulliondust, for the fiftieth time, at a table d'hôte at Saratoga.

"I am heartily rejoiced to hear it," observes a mild-looking elderly gentleman, who had not spoken for days—"it has saved Providence a great deal of responsibility."

Mr. Bulliondust has had his innings, and pretty good ones, too. Upon one contract—100,000 cubic yards of rubble masonry—he netted five shillings a yard sheer profit. Of course it was subsequently discovered that his lime was simply rubbish, and that his stone bore the same relationship to the real thing that slack does to coal. Nevertheless, he was enabled to place his thumb unto his nose, and stretch his fingers in the direction of Bungaroo. The engineers howled dismally, and called him something worse than Jeremy Diddler, but he manfully held by the specification; and the scientific gentlemen retired in the direction of the institute to compare notes, and to read papers to the sleepy associates.

Mr. Bulliondust is, as the Yankees say, "in the neighbourhood" of fifty-five years. He is of ruddy complexion, with a tendency to a violet tint about the tip of the nose and the upper crust of the cheek bones. He wears a moustache, but shaves his purple, pimply chin. He curls his whiskers, and besmears them with a foul compound emitting a heavy, filthy perfume. Did any man or woman ever dye without the knowledge of every other man and woman of his acquaintance? We pause for a reply, and don't we wish we may get it.

The contractor's eyes are encased in fat, sleepy lids, and are given to watering when he laughs, frowns, or talks. His mouth is horribly sensual; and his yellow teeth stand out in a defying and threatening way, sugges-

tive of nutcracking to a Darwinean degree, if not of actual cannibalism. His hands are covered with hair, his nails with ink, or—and he wears a diamond ring. Why do cads invariably wear diamond rings?

The date of this story is 1857, and it opens in a room in Bedford-square, the residence of Mr. John James Bulliondust.

This apartment is covered by a decayed Turkey carpet. In the centre stands a desk with a thousand and one drawers. Each drawer possesses at least three knobs or handles, for all the world like the stops upon an organ. The pigeon-holes are crammed with mouldy-looking papers, a couple of cheque-books are lying upon the desk—each the open sesame to a different bank: two financial strings to his financial bow.

Japanned boxes, one piled upon the other, decorate the walls of the room. A Louis Quatorze clock—not going, of course—decorates the chimneypiece; above it a drawing of a reservoir, upon the construction of which the self-made man had picked up, say £50,000, hangs, as a sort of "Turn again Whittington" incentive; and about a dozen of old hats, covered with dust, and about as many pairs of boots, especially puddle boots, fill up the corners of this sanctum sanctorum.

Mr. Bulliondust enters this apartment, his chin covered with egg, and the corners of his mouth with butter, extracted from his toast. He has just breakfasted, newspapered, and is about to boot and saddle.

His feet are ornamented with most uncompromising bunions; and as he is about to encase them in a new pair of boots, he rather shirks the process than otherwise. However, the bitter cup must be drained, and he commences—to sip it.

In endeavouring to avoid a bunion, he falls foul of a red-hot corn—a grail, disreputable corn—a corn with no claim to respectability save age—cantankerous, irritable, and ready to blaze out upon the slightest provocation. He laid the foundation of this corn in Sunday boots, when he was casting his navvy skin, and making tracks towards Miss Marrowfin's £5,000—which he ultimately collared ere he treated her to one of the finest funerals that ever entered the gates of Kensal-green Cemetery.

He is going before the board of directors of the Soft Sawdor Company (Limited), who have a little contract to give away, and

he wishes to appear O K, K O K—"rekerkay."

He swears horribly as the corn comes at him, and at this juncture the door opens, and a tall, well-made, aristocratic, but singularly seedy-looking young man enters. The newcomer's hair is cut and brushed *ad unguem*. His hay-coloured beard is also carefully looked after, so are his hands and nails; but, oh, his boots are patched, and open to an offer of more patching. His coat is shiny about the elbows and button-holes, and white in the direction of the seams. His trousers are frayed at the heels, and baggy about the knees; but his shirt collar is marvellously clean, although it bears the indelible imprint of the hand of time and of the washerwoman.

His personal appearance— But who cares for the personal appearance of so seedy a hermit as this? It might be just as well to mention, though, that his eyes are dark blue, a dangerous blue—that is, dangerous to novel-reading young females who are given to building castles in Spain, and who are desirous of getting a chance of playing Lucy Ashton to a desirable Master of Ravenswood, or even Pauline Deschappelles—always provided that Claude can prick his arm at the right moment, and show just a *leelle* purple blood, whilst he outbids yon sordid huckster for his "priceless gem," or words to that effect. His nose is slightly aquiline, and his short upper lip rolls up his flaxen moustache, act-drop fashion, in a most supercilious manner, quite out of keeping with his shoddy raiment. He has a letter in his hand, which he stretches in the direction of the suffering contractor, much as a monarch might extend his royal paw for the purpose of being kissed by one of his faithful and loving subjects.

"What is it?" growled the contractor.

"A letter," was the reply, in a rich, *lustrous*—we use the word advisedly—voice.

"From who?"

"Can't say."

"Open it, can't you?"

"I can."

The shabbily attired young man leisurely proceeded to open the letter, and as leisurely proceeded to read it aloud. This is what he read—

"Healdon Hall, July 27, 1857.

"MY DEAR BULLIONDUST—I am desired by the governor to ask you to come down

to us on Friday, and to stop as long as you can—at all events, until Monday. He will ask Lord Cockleborough and some of your new neighbours to meet you. You promised to come; so *do*, like a good fellow, make this your half-way house.—Yours socially,

"BEAUVOIR DELMINGTON.

"P.S.—I must ask you, with your usual kindness, to renew my little bill, due to-morrow, and, of course, mum's the word.

"B. D."

The boot was upon the contractor's foot, covering corn and bunion, and grilling both.

"Renew his little bill! of course I shall. It's a smart bill; just like a snowball—the more it rolls, the more it grows. Ha, ha!"

Here the yellow teeth chinked together metallically.

"Ha, ha! I'm asked and pressed to go to the Hall, am I? Me, who was treated like a tradesman! Me, who wasn't good enough for to be shook hands with! Ha, ha!"

Another chink of the yellow teeth—which, for colour and evenness, might vie with the grains of Indian corn.

"I'll make them shake hands with me. I'll make them treat me like a gentleman, for all their pride. I have the heir in my claws. That thousand pounds was a good plant. He is my slave. I can dance on him."

Suiting the action to the word, he flopped his unsymmetrical feet upon the Turkey carpet—and paid dearly for his pantomimic gesture. Several minutes elapsed ere the physical anguish cooled down, during which the seedy personage trimmed his nails with an office knife.

"Sit down, Mr. Ruthven, and write to Mr. Beauvoir" (he pronounced it Bow-voy) "Delmington, and say I'll go."

"It's not usual to reply to private letters, and such a letter as this, through another," replied the party by the name of Ruthven.

"Can't you do as you're asked?" retorted the contractor, pettishly.

Mr. Ruthven lounged towards a morocco-covered office chair, dropped into it as if it had been specially constructed for him, and dipping a pen into an ink bottle decorated with the head of a sphinx, calmly awaited further instructions.

"Write and say I'll be there on Friday

by the 5.30, and that I'm taking you with me."

Mr. Ruthven looked up at his employer—for in this relationship they stood towards one another; and it might be conducive to securing a good opening if their relationship were fully explained just at this particular point of this highly interesting narrative.

Mr. Sydney Ruthven—this is not his real name—is secretary (bless the word!)—clerk is bad; scrivener—oh, heavens! three halfpence a folio!—is worse; and— No; we cannot go lower down the gamut. Sydney Ruthven is secretary to the great contractor, John James Bulliondust. It sounds well for Bulliondust, and only costs him £150 per annum for a good flow of ideas, grammar worthy of the Queen's speech—Heaven forgive those who commit such treason as to permit her to use some of it!—and faultless orthography.

Sydney Ruthven is under a cloud. Why, Mr. Bulliondust does not inquire. What is it to him?—no cash passes that way; and if the young man is sarcastic, and gloomy, and supercilious, let him slide. The contractor takes a good £500 worth out of him annually, and that's all he cares about. Certainly, he might dress better, and make a more respectable figure. But, depend upon it, he is possessed of the stereotyped wife of aristocratic but haughty and relentless parents, who have closed their patent-hinged door against her, and the stereotyped lovely babes, five in number, and the sixth hourly expected. It is better not to tap him up on that point, as he might be induced to ask for an increase in his salary, and that would never pay.

The secretary looked up, with rather a startled expression about his face, and his flaxen moustache disappeared in the curl of his upper lip, as he said—

"Me go to Healdon Hall? Not if I know it."

"Why not, sir?" demanded Mr. Bulliondust, with the growl of a bear about to suck its paw.

Sydney Ruthven flushed up, and the flush became him immensely.

"Because my clothes are too seedy."

And he laughed a dry, mocking laugh—the laugh of the Demon of Poverty under the nose of the Archangel of Gold.

"Not a bit of it. You are not expected to dress like me," said Mr. Bulliondust, who inwardly resolved upon showing his might,

and strength, and power, and position, at the Hall, by trotting out a live secretary, and showing the Delmingtons that, although he was not as yet a cabinet minister, his multifarious affairs demanded the aid of a human writing machine to keep them in anything approaching to order. He had recently dropped into a place adjoining Healdon Hall, which he had gotten upon terms dictated by himself to a needy wretch whom he held in his grasp with a grip akin to that of a vice. Nor did he relax his hold until Audley Park and all the appurtenances thereto belonging were duly and legally transferred unto him, his heirs, administrators, and assigns, for 999 years. He hoped for the magistracy and lieutenantancy of the county. He hoped one day to find himself within the walls of St. Stephen's, representing the said county. He played for high stakes, and he played a winning game.

"I could not go in this toggery," laughed the secretary; "the people there would imagine you had taken me out of the field where I had been put up to frighten the crows."

"Bosh! You must come, and if necessary I might—that is, the principle is a bad one but—under the circumstances, I would advance you, say—a week's wages."

Oh, navvy, navvy, why could you not say salary? It makes all the difference. Wages! pshaw!

Sydney Ruthven threw himself back in the office chair, closed his eyes, and folded his hands. It was the action of a moment; but it wrought its changes, nevertheless.

"I don't require any advance of wages," he said.

"Then you'll come," interposed the other, in a voice somewhat relieved from anxiety.

"Yes, I'm on," replied the secretary—adding to himself, "I may as well read this chapter in the book as any other. A few months, weeks, days, hours will free me; and then—"

Mr. Bulliondust graciously consented to forward an autograph letter to Healdon Hall, to acquaint the inhabitants thereof with the honour in store for them.

"Have you no Sunday clothes?" he asked, eyeing his secretary as he folded the note.

"I have," was the quiet reply; "but they are a trifle more rusty than these—if possible."

"These Delmingtons are great nobs, and you may perhaps be asked to dinner," observed Mr. Bulliondust, endeavouring to pull off a bloodstone ring for the purpose of sealing the missive, "and in that case—"

"I shall refuse the invitation. I go upon these terms: my own room, my meals therein and my time at my own disposal when you do not require my services."

"You are, perhaps, right; but I'll take care you are well fed, and that you get as good as in the dining-room."

"You are very kind," said Sydney Ruthven.

The expression upon his face was, to say the least of it, very peculiar.

ONLY A YEAR.

CHAPTER XIV.

"WRITE TO ME, FOR GOD'S SAKE."

GILFRED KYRIEL went to Merresford with Thyrlé, and from thence, with a very lightened heart, home to the Manor House.

Not much sleeping was done that night by the inmates of the Manor House. Little Kittie had stolen to her sister's room to tell her wonderful, delightful secret, which met with the heartiest sympathy; and the sisters had sat talking until the spring dawn broke, and Gilfred had returned.

"I will wait till the afternoon," thought Phillis, as she kissed Kittie, and sent her away. "Time enough to tell them when he is here."

Kittie made the coffee that morning, her blue eyes the while full of tears—half sad, half joyful; and Phillis, watchful for her little sister, detained Gilfred upstairs with their mother, thus leaving the lovers alone for their last words. A little after eight, when Gilfred and Brooke had gone, she persuaded Kittie to go to bed for an hour or two, and she herself tried to go to sleep on a sofa. But a strange tumult of bright thoughts possessed her, and she could not stay still. She wandered out into the sunny garden, and drank in with delight the fresh morning breeze. She found some violets, which she decided would do for Thyrlé's button-hole, and put them in her own dress in the meanwhile. She went to the gate, and listened for the sound of horse's hoofs; then blushed and smiled at her folly in thinking it possible he could be coming

yet. She went into the house, and found it was not even ten o'clock. She did not know how to pass away the lagging time. She tried in vain to read; she would have sung, but feared to disturb Kittie. After moving restlessly from room to room, she went out again—this time to the stables—and saw and caressed Dickie: had he not been at Merresford? Then she strayed again into the garden, and was again irresistibly attracted to listen at the gate. At length, tired out with trying to make the hours go quicker, and failing so dismally, she resolutely took up some work, and seated herself in the bay window of the gallery upstairs. Not much work was done—poor Phillis's eyes were raised so constantly to the Cross-roads Hill. Eleven o'clock struck, and, after an incredibly long interval, twelve.

"How soon he will be here! I dare say he will come before one."

She flitted downstairs to tell Mrs. Dixon, the housekeeper, to be sure to have luncheon punctually at half-past one, as she remembered Kittie had been in bed all the morning.

Then, after a very long pause, one o'clock struck.

"It is very odd," she said; and took out her watch, and looked at it incredulously. "Well, I may put this tiresome work away now, and watch for him. The sun is on the hill now, and I shall see him the moment he comes in sight."

Aye, Phillis; but how if he comes not? Who knows what changes a day or an hour may bring forth?

She waited, her eyes fixed on the hill—at first with impatience, then with some anger and indignation; and at last, when three and four o'clock had passed, with unspeakable anxiety. Her heart throbbed painfully when anything came in sight, her cheeks were burning with her feverish agitation.

"What can it mean?—what can it mean?" she repeated again and again.

Then she heard Kittie's voice and step below, and compelled herself to go downstairs, to talk and smile; and after a little tea, which the girls took together, Kittie induced Phillis to go and lie down.

"You look worn-out, dear," she said.

And Phillis went accordingly to her own room. But she soon stole quietly to the upper storey, and resumed her watch.

"He is sure to come, or at least to send,"

she argued. And she saw the sunlight grow brighter and deeper on the hillside, and then slowly fade away; and still he gave no sign.

"What can it mean?"

Twilight came, it grew too dark to see the hill; the stars glimmered out; and with an unutterable sense of disappointment, dismay, and foreboding at her heart, Phillis went back to her room.

The violets—faded now—which were to have been Thyrlé's, fell into her hands. She kept them passionately to her lips, for his sake; and threw herself, weary with waiting and wondering, on her bed. Merciful sleep held her fast until late the next morning. She sprang up, with fresh hope in her breast.

"He is certain to come and explain it all to-day! There may even now be a letter or a message for me."

She rang hastily to ask, but there was no letter, no message for Miss Kyriel. No one had called yet this morning.

Phillis's heart sank. Was there to be another day of interminable hours and incessant watching and listening, like yesterday?

It was impossible! She must hear to-day.

But, like yesterday, the sunshine stole round, and slept on the hill; many shadows crossed it, but never that of the lover who came not. Like the sunlight of yesterday, it brightened and deepened, faded away, and the stars came out; and still he gave no sign.

"I cannot bear another day like this," thought Phillis, as she tossed restlessly, during the silent, heavily dragging hours of the night, sleepless and feverish.

She put on her riding habit in the morning.

"I don't care what people may think," she said to herself, "or even what he thinks. I must find out what has happened. He must be ill, very ill."

But fate was against her. She met Lord Ashley, and he insisted on escorting her on her ride; and she found it impossible, in spite of her resolutions as to public opinion, to say to him that she was going to call on Miss Mason, at Merresford. She knew he would put a different construction on it, much nearer to the truth. And again she passed a sleepless night, wearying her soul with vain conjectures; and again she put on

her habit in the morning. Again she started with her groom behind her, and this time arrived at Merresford without serious interruption. She was told, in reply to her question—

"Miss Mason is from home, miss."

"Do you mean gone away, or only in the grounds?"

"She has gone to London, miss."

"And Mr. Thyrlé—has he gone also?"

Her heart was throbbing so that she could hardly speak or hear; but know about this she must, whatever the servants chose to think.

"Master have gone too, miss."

"When did they leave?"

"Early on the morning of the 15th."

"Thanks. I have not got my cards with me, but it does not signify."

He had gone, then, on the very day after the ball!

As she rode away, the necessity of stifling all signs of her cruel disappointment seemed more than she could accomplish. She felt suffocating, dizzy, fainting. She never remembered clearly that ride home; but she rejoiced that Kittie was not in sight when she arrived there; and she went, with a death-white face, her eyes wild with the intensity of her suffering, and locked and bolted herself in her room.

There she wrestled with her grief—as we all have to do, at some terrible hour in our lives—single-handed and alone. One conviction kept continually forcing itself upon her—Thyrlé had never loved her, had left her for ever.

What explanation was it possible for him to offer her? He had won her love, only to deliberately insult her; and, whatever it might cost her, she must forget him, as she had compelled herself to forget Hasson Grainger in the old time. She must learn to hold him unworthy, as she had forced herself to think of that long ago first lover. She knew this would be very hard to do. She thought over again, again and again, every word, look, and action of Thyrlé's which she could recall—and she could remember a great many—and among them all she could find nothing to lead her to the conclusion which she felt she must arrive at if she would recover anything of her former peace of mind. Yet, struggle with herself day and night, as she did, to think evil of him, she could not persuade herself, in her inmost heart, that he was otherwise

than good and honourable; and thus, as she continued to believe in him and esteem him, she could not cease to love him. Sometimes she thought he must have seen how far short she, with her changeable and often frivolous temper, came of his ideal, Alice Graham; and that he had gone in silence, thinking to give her less pain thus than by telling her the truth. But no conjecture could satisfy her; and she was not a woman to sit down tamely and suffer. She wrote a note to him, when ten days or more of perfect silence on his part had elapsed, beginning "Dear Mr. Thyrlé," and asking him the reason of his abrupt departure, and his utter forgetfulness of her. One word—even of anger or unkindness—would be welcome; any punishment would be easier to bear than the lingering pain he was making her endure.

"Write to me, for God's sake!—write anything—or I shall go mad! What does it mean? What have I done? Forgive me if I have offended you—only write to me!"

Her tortures had made her humble. The haughty beauty, who had denied so many, now stooped to entreaty herself, and would have gladly kissed the meanest hands which would have brought her any tidings.

She did not read her letter over, for fear she dare not send it; she addressed it to the house in Grosvenor-square, knowing it from having been there in the Merresfords' time, and took it to the post-office in Hallingford herself.

And morning after morning she rose with the same hope, and received the same sickening pang of disappointment. No letter came for her in answer.

All this time she had contrived, by how great an effort she only could say, to keep up a semblance of her usual self—to take an interest in things around her; to sympathize in Kittie's happiness, while her own heart felt breaking. Yet she did it all, and more. She compelled herself to talk and laugh with visitors, even to pay necessary visits; to hear Mr. Thyrlé's name mentioned, and to listen while his sudden and singular absence was commented on, without betraying the shot of absolute agony it sent through her. He had sent his card to Lady Rose, Phillis heard some three weeks after his departure, with a note of apology for his inability to call at Hemsley Towers, saying that he was unavoidably detained in

London, and could not tell when he should return to Knollinghamshire. This was all she heard. And if her laugh and her smiles were forced and few, if her voice lost its careless ring, and her eyes their brightness, no one saw it yet. Gilfred was away, Kittie was too preoccupied; and when under her mother's eyes, Phillis made extra efforts to be cheerful.

The end of March came, and with it a letter from Mr. Brooke (backed by one from Gilfred), urgently appealing to Kittie to marry him early in April. The regiment was under orders to sail for Canada (it was believed towards the end of April), and he earnestly entreated that they might be allowed to be married before then. He hoped, if so, to be able to get marriage leave, and they could spend at least part of the summer in England.

After much demur, and a letter from a providential maiden aunt of Brooke's, who, in a perfectly unexpected manner, came forward with an offer of £5,000 to her godson on the approaching event, and which a good deal smoothed the way, Mrs. Kyriel consented.

With Kittie's own little fortune, Frank's pay and allowance, and this help to start them in the world, she thought the young couple, with care and economy, might be well enough off. Kittie was a first-rate little housekeeper; and then, Frank was such a very nice fellow, Fred's great friend, of a good family, and they all knew him intimately.

So at last it was satisfactorily arranged; and, amid the hurry of preparation, Phillis strove in vain to forget her own silent despair. She succeeded well outwardly; but there were long hours of darkness, when her soul—wearied, perplexed, prostrate under her strange trial—poured itself forth in such desperation as can only be known between the blind, impotent human being and its all-wise Creator.

Proud, indifferent Phillis began, humbly enough, to take lessons from her little sister about their mother's habits and comforts, and various items regarding the management of the household, hitherto almost solely conducted by Kittie.

The wedding day, the 15th of April, came and went. It was a quiet wedding, Mrs. Kyriel not being able to bear any extra excitement. Kittie was a fair, charming little bride, and had four lovely bridesmaids

—her beautiful sister Phillis, the two pretty Miss Graingers, and the eldest Miss Rose, the beauty of that family. Gilfred, who had come from Ireland on three days' leave, was at the Manor House the day after the wedding, and did not fail to notice a change in Phillis which quite alarmed him. Few people can carry a painful burden on their hearts, and spend half or all of every night in waking and weeping, yet show no traces in a month. Phillis had fought bravely to hide her secret, and would hide it, though she were to die in consequence. It was her only consolation that it was a secret which no one ever seemed to suspect; for no power could measure what her pride had suffered when all Knollinghamshire had bestowed its undesired pity upon her—had said that Hasson Grainger had behaved ill to her and broken off the engagement. Gilfred mentioned his sister's altered looks both to his mother and to Phillis herself; but both said that it was owing to the anxiety and hurry about Kittie's marriage, and her grief at losing her only sister, and Gilfred was silenced.

Being alone with him for a few minutes on the day he left, Phillis said—

"Have you heard from Mr. Thyrlé, Fred? He is in London, isn't he?"

At least an hour's rehearsal had been spent over these words; and they were uttered without a change of her face, and in a perfectly indifferent, conversational tone.

"No, I've not heard from him. Is he at the Grosvenor-square house?"

• "I should think so."

"I'll look him up, if I have time, as I go through town. I should rather like to see him, and I ought to be civil to him."

"I wish you would take him a package from me. Would it bore you?"

"Oh, I don't much mind—what is it?"

"A box—an Indian box he one day brought here, and left behind him. I am tired of seeing it."

"Well, if you like, I'll take it. But it's hardly worth while, is it? He can get it when he comes back."

But Phillis carried her point. The diamond necklace was packed in its strange, sweet-scented box, carefully hidden, and secured by paper, strings, and seals, and bestowed in Gilfred's portmanteau. A few days after, Phillis read this in a letter from her brother—

"I had time to go to Grosvenor-square, and found Thyrlé in. I gave him the parcel from you, and he said it was all right. He has got the house done up in very good style; but says he is tired of town; and talks of going to some absurd place—North Pole or Siberia. What a rum thing it is, that when a fellow has money, and nice places to live in, and every mortal thing a man can want, that he can't be quiet and enjoy it. I had a rough passage across from Holyhead—hope it won't be like that all the way out," &c.

Phillis dropped the letter on her solitary breakfast table.

"Going to Russia, after all! Oh, my God! is there no compassion for me? Am I always to give my love to men who despise it, and leave me; while I cannot care for those who have a true affection for me? I believed so in Thyrlé. I thought he really did like me. What a wretched, wretched world this is!"

One more effort she felt she must make. The former letter might possibly have miscarried, or have been lost; such things had been heard of. So she wrote once more—a brief, cold note this time—saying she had returned the diamond necklace, for which she begged to thank him; adding, that she imagined from his utter silence that he considered, as she did, that the engagement between them was broken off.

This note met with no better fate than the former. Thyrlé neither wrote nor came.

Kittie's bright, good-tempered face and voice were painfully missed at the Manor House. A silent time followed the gay noise and life of the winter months. The early spring blossoms gave way to hawthorn, lilac, and laburnum; then, in their turn, the roses of June were in blossom, and Phillis Kyriel was learning a hard, strange lesson—that of humility and patience. The proud spirit which at first had exclaimed, "I cannot bear this—I must know the truth," had bowed in submission; the heart which, in its anguish, had wished its throbbing over, had obtained calmness, if not the resignation and peace which she laboured for. She acquiesced in the fact that happiness is God's gift; but that contentment is within the reach of the disappointed, the afflicted, the tried and weary in every degree in life. It was to this—to contentment and the ful-

filment of a daily round of self-imposed duties—that the beauty of Knollinghamshire, lately so thoughtless and brilliant; now aspired.

TABLE TALK.

THE Lord Mayor has lately been “opening” the new baths and washhouses erected for the parish of Paddington; and, amongst other appropriate remarks touching upon cleanliness, he is reported to have said—“He had from time to time met many distinguished men—persons eminent in literature, in science, in art, in politics—but he noticed that they were oftentimes dirty.” Pleasant this for these “distinguished men”—distinguished also in their crust of dirt. Blessed institution, then, this of baths and washhouses! The civic dignitary can in future dispense his hospitality in a way more suited to the “distinguished men:” instead of treating them to turtle, he can treat them as turtles, and offer them a water vessel, a piece of soap, and a towel, in place of the well-known serviette.

HERE IS A little about our new armour-plated man-of-war. The *Inflexible* carries all her side-armour upon a central space 110 feet in length. It is 24 inches thick, and protects with that monstrous wall of solid iron her engines, her crew, and her battery of four 80-ton guns. Along the rest of her—fore and aft—there is no vertical armour, but a thick inside cushion of cork of enormous buoyancy, more than 60 feet square in section, surrounding bunkers full of coal for the supply of the ship. A horizontal deck of thick metal extending fore and aft from the citadel, at a depth of six or seven feet from the water-line, will cut off all this unarmoured upper portion from the real hold of the vessel. Now, this is all very well; but would it not be advisable for our naturalists to take this matter in hand, so as to save the nation some of the vast expense? We must have, it seems, these huge, armour-plated vessels built; why not grow them? The idea is presented to Mr. Henry Lee, who might experimentalize on a small scale in one of his aquarium tanks, picking out the most suitable armour-plated turtle he can find, and seeing what can be done in the way of development, shape, construction. Everything is right; all that is wanted is size, and that could be obtained

by selection and interbreeding. But perhaps Mr. Lee will not think the idea worth having.

SKATING HAS become a fashionable pursuit, and is carried on largely now at Prince's Ground. The skates used are, of course, the regular wheeled india-rubber contrivances, with which, at no little exertion of force, the skater glides over a flooring of asphalt. This is at best but a poor apology; and the idea occurs, could not something better be contrived? For instance: ice is now made by machinery—hard, pure, and in any shape and size—at a very rapid rate. An ice floor would not, perhaps, be very easily maintained in order, so keep to the asphalt; but why not have a freshly contrived skate, into which, as often as required, an attendant standing by a machine could slip stout blades of pure ice, which would glide over the asphalt as rapidly as the metal blade does in winter over an icy plain. There are disadvantages, of course. The blades would rapidly wear down, and they would dissolve; but there is the machine producing them continually, and the skater would only have to glide up, hold up one foot—click!—a fresh blade could be slipped into a screw groove; hold up the other foot—click!—there would be a repetition, and away he could go. The greatest drawback seems to be the fact that the asphalt would be rather wet with the melting ice. However, the plan must be worth a trial: we commend it to the proprietor of Prince's Ground.

A LONG correspondence has been going on in the pages of a weekly newspaper upon the question of novel reading, with the result that it seems to be definitely decided that it is not good for young people to read bad novels, and that it is not bad for young people to read good novels. It is possible that this might have been arrived at without correspondence.

All Contributions are attentively considered, and unaccepted MSS. are returned on receipt of stamps for postage; but the Editor cannot hold himself responsible for any accidental loss. No unaccepted MSS. will be returned until a written application has been made for them.

Terms of Subscription to ONCE A WEEK, free by post:—Weekly Numbers for Six Months, 5s. 5d.; Monthly Parts, 5s. 5d.

ONCE A WEEK

NEW SERIES.

No. 337.

June 13, 1874.

Price 2d.

JACK'S SISTER; OR, WOMANLY PAST QUESTION.

CHAPTER XXXII.
MISS DYNEVOR.



INNIE, with the very expression on her face which it had worn during their last interview—the expression which subsequent events had stamped so indelibly on his mind.

And she was not dead, after all!

At first he could hardly believe it—hardly credit the evidence of his own senses; but as the fact of her presence grew upon him, as he realized more and more that it was veritably and indeed the same girl with whom he had idled away his time at Oxford, only grown into the full grace and beauty of womanhood, a great thankfulness filled his heart, an immense load seemed lifted from his shoulders. He felt himself a free man again—free from shame and remorse, from the guilt of a girl's undeserved obloquy, and a girl's too early death. He forgot how that obloquy had told on her. He forgot her father's sudden end. He failed even to read the meaning of that new expression—half cruel, half mocking—about the full, curved lips; that hard, defiant look in the deep, beautiful eyes, larger and more lustrous than ever. All he saw, all he understood was that Minnie lived, and was standing

before him, in the full luxuriance of her beauty and talents, on the boards of a temple where her poor father would have thought her lost to all eternity if she had even set her foot as a spectator.

He waited till the second act was over, and then seized the advantage of the ten minutes' interval to try to get admission behind the scenes.

It was not easy. Mounteagle, the manager of the Universe, had already been embarrassed by the extreme popularity of his new "lionne." Miss Dynevor herself was chary of green-room privileges, sometimes refusing word or look even to those who had already extorted from her the concession of an entrée. Persuasion proving utterly useless, Merle was fain to try that golden key which seldom fails in any strait of life. It did not on this occasion; though, even in closing his fist on two ill-spared sovereigns, the doorkeeper reminded his client that he was to be held blameless in case of Miss Dynevor's being offended.

"You says a hold friend, sir, so I s'pose it's all right; but she's a quick-tempered one, is Miss Dynevor; fiery—saving your presence, sir—as the devil himself."

Merle smiled and promised; then passed on, wondering. Fiery! Well, remembering one or two scenes in their last interviews, he could believe in the possibility of her showing fire when roused; but to be talked of familiarly as a violent-tempered woman, his loving, submissive little Minnie (not so little now, but he forgot that), it seemed impossible!

He had reached the end of the dark and dingy passage; and only an open doorway, certain ungainly stacks of scenery, and a canvas screen, intervened between him and a room bright with glaring gas, and noisy with voices and laughter. Yet still he lingered. For the first time, the question crossed his mind, how would she receive him? His own heart was still beating vio-

lently from the shock of recognition; and yet it had felt so little for her in past days as to resist her pleading and her passion alike. Was it wise to stir up dead fires by a meeting now? Was it wise to risk a second waking of that love which had been passionate enough to wreck the girl's life?

He was not a conceited man—almost painfully conscious, indeed, of his own defects; but he knew—knew in every pulse of his being—that Minnie had loved him with all the love of her heart, that to her he had been as a god, until, of his own will, he descended from the shrine where she had placed him, and cast back her worship into her bleeding hands. He knew this; and, remembering the old impulsiveness of the girl, shrank, with all the natural dislike of Englishmen for a scene, from the risk of a shriek, a fainting fit, or God knows what other result his sudden appearance might produce.

Absurd as it seemed, and waste of money as it would assuredly be, Merle, looking on this possibility, felt more than half inclined to return, when two men coming up the passage behind checked the retrograde movement, and changed his mind. He knew them both—one by sight, a certain Sir Carlton Drugh, well known in the chronicle scandaleuse of the day; the other, the editor of an equally well-known magazine, to which Merle had not unfrequently contributed; and the latter broke off something he was saying about "the Dynevor" to greet his literary acquaintance, with very undisguised amusement and astonishment at finding him there.

N.B.—Merle's articles had been semi-theological, and of high moral standing.

"What, Mr. Kinnardson! you among the lost tribes!" he exclaimed, laughing, and dropping his voice at the adjective, in deference to the company within hearing; and Merle laughed too, and answered as though the idea of his presence there was as good a joke to himself as to any one else. I am afraid he added some word to induce the belief that he was there in a literary capacity; for Sir Carlton Drugh smiled, and put in—

"Proving the evil that you may show it up, as mothers read the naughty novels, so as to be able to warn their daughters against them, eh?"

"Precisely," said Merle. "Can't preach

where you haven't seen the practice. Probably, however, I might want to hold up the bright side of the lantern."

"Ah! something in the style of Gilbert's 'Only a Dancing Girl!' said Mr. Folby, the editor.

And so chatting, they threaded their way through intervening flies, lifts, and other carpentries, to the green-room, where Miss Dynevor, already dressed for the third act, was standing in the centre of the floor, holding out one shapely hand, to have the glove buttoned by a gentleman, who was manifestly bungling over his task in order to prolong the pleasure of holding the small wrist; and speaking in an eager undertone to its owner.

As the three men came into view, they had to pass under a brilliant jet of gas, which fell directly on their faces, bringing into strong relief every line and wrinkle on each.

Minnie's eyes were turned full upon them—so full that, in the act of according a good-humoured nod to Sir Carlton, who came first, they encountered Merle's eager face, pale with suppressed agitation, just behind.

The human button-hook aforementioned uttered a low cry of regret and consternation; for, in that same moment, Miss Dynevor's glove split from knuckle to wrist, in three broad gashes across the quick-clenched, quivering hand.

She stooped her head quickly to look at the damage, and laughed.

"Dear, dear! how awkward you are, Mr. Paul!—and my time almost up. One moment, Sir Carlton—I must get another pair."

And she turned hurriedly away to a box on a distant table, and began rummaging it; while Mr. Paul continued to pour out a confused stream of regrets and apologies; and Sir Carlton triumphed, not amiably, over the stupidity of the accident.

Miss Dynevor turned round at last, and answered them both with good-tempered imperiousness.

"Never mind, Mr. Paul—the thing was too tight and pinched me. It wasn't your fault; and, Sir Carlton, you're wrong—it's worse form to snub a man when he's down than to tear a stupid glove. Bring me another pair to-morrow, Mr. Paul, and we shall be quits."

"Egad! Paul, you're in luck," cried Sir

Carlton, poppy-colour with envy. "If Miss Dynevor rewards all such accidents with such liberality, she won't have a whole glove left in a week. Buy yourself a strong pair of boots at the same time; for in common gratitude you'll have to scour London from east to west, in search of the most recherche box to hold that glove that money can procure. I wish I were you."

"I don't," said Miss Dynevor—"that is, if he takes your advice. Look out you do no such thing, Mr. Paul; unless you want to be cut dead next time I see you."

"I'd risk it, Paul," said Sir Carlton, maliciously.

"I wouldn't," said Miss Dynevor. "I'm not going to have boys without tin enough to pay their own debts running up fresh ones for me. Give me that glass behind you, Sir Carlton. Thanks. Who was that man who came in with you? Editor of something or another, isn't he?"

"What, Folby? Yes, of the *Lictor*. He wanted to speak to A." (the leading comedian). "The other's a Mr. Kinnardson, a young id—" he broke off short, catching Merle's eyes; and being a man of the world, rounded off his sentence as if he had meant to be overheard—"a young gentleman who is at present fleshing his maiden sword against the stage and its abominations in the pages of the *Stone* or *Anchor*—which is it, Mr. Kinnardson? Let me introduce him to you, Miss Dynevor. You will be able to give him some wrinkles on the other side of the cloth, eh?"

"Very happy," Miss Dynevor said, bowing slightly, and with perfect unconcern.

All her movements, though quick and somewhat abrupt, were full of a certain lithe, vivacious grace, extremely fascinating to watch. She turned her beautiful eyes on Merle, as though he had been an utter stranger; and smiled with a sort of cool patronage, as she answered his half eager, half constrained greeting. The discomposure was on his side, after all. He wondered at himself now, for having dreaded a scene. A scene! and from this beautiful girl, with the brilliant, unabashed eyes, rouged cheeks, and saucy self-composure; this popular young actress, standing before whom, in the midst of her friends and admirers, he felt himself pale, stammering, and embarrassed. Poor fellow! It was the sharpest sting of all that she seemed quite aware of his discomposure; and smiled again,

half reassuringly, half, as it seemed, in contempt.

"Afraid I can't give you any wrinkles, Mr. Kinnardson. Indeed, I don't know that you deserve honours of war at all, coming into the enemy's camp in garb of peace to betray your hosts. But perhaps you're a parson, since you fight under the banner of the *Stone*; and 'honour among thieves' don't apply to the clerical camp, I've heard."

"I am not a clergyman," said Merle, gravely. For his life he could not have spoken otherwise just now. "And you must not believe Sir Carlton Drugh in toto, Miss Dynevor. His sketches are coloured from imagination."

"And drawn from fact," laughed Sir Carlton. "Indeed, recalling an article of yours, I might add, 'founded on a rock'! But, see the ingratitude of the world, Miss Dynevor! I gave Mr. Kinnardson what half the young men in London are dying for—an introduction to your lovely self; and the first use he makes of it is to slander me."

"What, use your own weapons against you!" cried Miss Dynevor, opening her eyes till they shone in the gaslight like wells of purple light. "That is base. But perhaps Mr. Kinnardson was not dying of the same disease as half the young men in London. Did he beg you to introduce him?"

"No," said Merle, very low, and with an under-current of meaning which only the actress understood. "The first sight of Miss Dynevor on the stage drew me here, in the hope of seeing so talented a—of—" He did not know himself what he had hoped, and the hard smile on those exquisite listening lips confused him. "But I could not take the liberty of asking an introduction, unless I had ascertained that it would not be displeasing to her beforehand."

He spoke falteringly; but with marked, almost deferential, respect. How strange it seemed, to be speaking so to the little girl he had taught, and bullied, and flattered two years ago: taught to deceive, bullied for prudery, flattered with empty, meaningless caresses! For one moment they were standing close together. A., the leading comedian, was just going on in the third act; Sir Carlton was paying his devoirs to another of the actresses; the manager was fussing round, asking for Miss Dynevor, and swear-

ing, not quite inaudibly, at intruders. Merle looked eagerly, imploringly in her face, and whispered—

"Minnie, I never knew you were living. I could not keep away after I saw you. For the sake of old times, let me see you once where I can ask you—"

"Miss Dynevor on," cried the call-boy.

"Miss Dynevor! Miss Dynevor!" repeated the manager, bustling up, and almost pushing Merle away. He could not get a word of answer. He could not even see a change of colour in the rouged and powdered face; but as he spoke her eyes lost for a moment their hard, mocking look, the long lashes drooped heavily over them, and the lips quivered as though a hot wind had passed across their chiselled beauty.

Merle went back to the body of the theatre, his heart beating madly; and sat out the rest of the play like one in a dream—every thought and feeling filled with the marvellous change in the girl he had befooled. Up above, in the dress circle, a little, dolly-faced man watched him go, watched where he went, and saw him return, smiling cynically at the agitation, visible through all disguise, in his face and manner.

"I knew it wath he—could have thworn it all along," Middlemist muttered, triumphantly. "What a blackguard he ith!"

Merle almost thought the same, as he went home that night. He had been one of the group waiting at the stage door to see Miss Dynevor step into her fly; had contrived to get delivered into her hands a penitent note, containing his address, and a renewed entreaty for an interview; and fancied that he had seen her eyes turn in his direction as she crossed the strip of pavement.

Now, he walked home in the soft, summer moonlight, and asked himself, "Cui bono?" What was he seeking this interview for? What good could result from following her up? She was alive—thank God for that!—alive and well: a successful actress, making money; and surrounded by admirers. He was preparing, or supposed to be preparing, himself for his ordination—a man engaged to be married, and engaged not only to the woman of his heart, but the woman whose money was his chief prospect for getting on comfortably in life. What could, what ought there to be in common now between him and Minnie Bruce—nay,

not even Minnie Bruce at present, but Lottie Dynevor? He did not love her. He never had loved her, in the highest sense of the word. He could do nothing for, and undo nothing against her, now. Why not leave her alone?—more especially when the mere seeking to renew the old acquaintance was a tacit insult to Enid; Enid, whom he did love; Enid, whose purity and trust deserved such faithful reverence from the man to whom she had consecrated herself.

Why?

Simply, because his passions were too strong, and his senses too weak, to resist the glamour of a girl's beauty and fascination; because the unutterable change in her shocked while it excited him; because an insane desire to feel her hand tremble in his once more—to evoke once again the old, loving light in those brilliant eyes—was more powerful than honour, duty, or even love.

That was why.

He stayed at home the whole of the following morning, pretending even to himself that he was busy; but knowing all the while that it was only a faint hope of some answer to his note which kept him within doors. None came; and the silence, instead of cooling this new frenzy, irritated it into a flame; and a letter from Enid, which did come by the early morning post, lay unopened all day. I think some half-feeling that he would keep it till he was in a fitter frame of mind for its perusal made him put it aside; but, as he did so, he turned its seal uppermost, so that not even the handwriting should remind him of his good angel at a moment when the evil one held predominance. When five o'clock struck, patience gave out; and having brushed his hat carefully, and selected a perfectly new pair of gloves, he sallied forth into the park, with the avowed hope of seeing Miss Dynevor again.

Even I, you see, am unable to call her by the old name. Little Minnie Bruce, with her innocent imprudence, her guileless love and faith, her quick temper, and childish wilfulness, had died, and been buried long ago in her father's grave. Better to pile the sods high above, and think of Miss Dynevor as another woman. Perhaps, after all, there was some excuse for Merle's interest in the latter. By his hand she had been created. The breath of his lips had called her into existence: an

existence which was, in all its entirety, the fruit of his perfect work. And "By their fruits shall ye know them," saith the Lord. Did he think of this, I wonder, when he looked back on that selfish, pleasant flirtation of his college days? And if so, did that awful warning, uttered eighteen hundred years ago in Galilee, strike meaningly upon his ear—"It is impossible but that offences will come; but woe unto him through whom they come. It were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and he cast into the sea, than that he should offend one of these little ones."

She was in the drive. Crowded as it was, more crowded than usual, it seemed to him that he could have distinguished that pair of iron-grey ponies among twice the number. They were drawn up close to the rails; and Miss Dynevor, resplendent in a dress of rich, shimmering, sea-green silk, a velvet spencer fitting accurately to her slight and lissome figure, and a broad-brimmed, grey felt hat, looped up at one side, à la Rousby, with a malachite buckle, and encircled by a huge ostrich feather, palely green in hue, and falling over the glossy coil of chestnut hair behind, looked at once superb and disdainful. Several people were leaning over the rails beside the carriage; and her companion, a flaxen-haired nymph in mauve and white, was keeping up quite an animated war of words with two cavaliers on horseback; but Miss Dynevor leant back, with eyes half closed, and a tiny parasol, all green silk and white lace, held close to her face, as though to shut out the applicants for favour on her side of the carriage. Merle quietly and unobtrusively worked his way into a position just parallel with the ponies' heads; and, as he did so, the face under the grey hat turned white as wax, and over all the languid body ran a shiver, perceptible even to her companion.

"Are you cold, love?" the latter asked, turning round. "La! Lottie, darling, you're as pale as pale."

Some young ladies always call each other "love" and "darling"—those behind the counter and on the stage particularly. The practice is sweet; but, on the whole, I do not admire it in public.

Miss Dynevor pulled herself up erect, and laughed.

"Cold!" she said, "I should think so. There's a wind cuts in between those trees

sharp enough to saw one in two. Now, Mr. Paul, unless you want to see me go into a galloping consumption, take your hands off Lulu, and let me drive on."

She gathered up the reins, and touched the off pony with her whip as she spoke. The pair started off; and Merle, still standing, lifted his hat with a look of half reproachful, half humble appeal. Minnie bowed her head one short half-inch. The colour had come back now—rushed up over cheek and brow in a crimson tide; and the under lip was bitten fiercely, as if in the effort to keep down the heavy, panting breath.

"I'm sure you've caught cold, dear," said the flaxen-haired nymph—who, being engaged in the same theatre, lived with and chiefly on her friend, and was very sympathetic accordingly.

"Egad! Mr. Kinnardson," cried Sir Carlton Drugh, lounging up to the Oxonian's side, "I don't wonder you are spell-bound. That's the loveliest face out this season; and the young woman knows it too. Of all the impudent——"

"She is very pretty," Merle said, hoarsely. Then, with a sudden idea, one which had not crossed his mind before—"By the way, the advertisements say 'Miss Dynevor.' Do you know whether that is only a nom d'artiste, or is she married?"

"Married!" Sir Carlton burst into a loud, coarse laugh, which made sundry fine ladies shiver. He seemed to have taken a fancy to Merle, however; for he walked along the whole length of the Row with him, and was exceedingly amusing, not to say piquant, on the subject of Miss Dynevor: finally inviting his new friend to a Star and Garter lunch on the following Sunday, at which the fair actress was to be present. Merle went home, cursing himself, his folly, and more especially Sir Carlton, whom he could have strangled cheerfully for more than one observation during the walk; but, all the same, Sunday found him one of a gay party assembled at the great Richmond hostelry; and Minnie, watching, saw that while he admired her more with every moment, the timid respect of their first meeting was gone altogether.

Before a week was over, he had gained his point, and obtained permission to call on the actress in her own house in Edithgrove, West Brompton.

A HOLIDAY IN THE NORTH.

III.

IT was nearly ten o'clock when we reached the town, and finding no boat to take us on board, we applied to Mr. Hausen, the agent, to find us one. Mrs. Hausen asked us into the house; and, on our gladly accepting her invitation, set a substantial supper before us, and then asked us to join her household in the next room. Here we found quite a large party assembled, including several persons from the *Diana*—all but one, however, being Danish, Faroese, or Icelandic. It was a most curious scene. The room was tolerably full of tobacco smoke, and the whole assemblage was sitting round the room—the men smoking, listening to the music and singing of two young ladies at the piano. We took seats among the others, and did what we could to join in the conversation; and a very pleasant hour we spent, listening to the music, in the warm summer twilight, till eleven o'clock, when the party broke up, and we returned on board.

It still seemed too early to turn in, and we stood about on deck, chatting and watching the fading sunset colours, which were still visible in the north-west.

One of our fellow-passengers, a Dane, was leaving the ship at two a.m. in a small boat, to go to Süderoe, where he was remaining until the *Diana* returned, and he had no intention of going to bed before starting. When we came on board he was engaged in chaffing the engineer, who had managed to get an involuntary bath during the day, while trying to get into a boat. The chaff, however, was not taken kindly, and our lively friend turned his attention to us. As he had provoked remarks on his pronunciation of the English language, he offered to bet us "whiskies round" that he would read any four lines of English we might choose, in such a manner that none of us could tell he was not an Englishman. We laughed him to scorn, and eagerly took up his bet. A book was fetched, and the four lines he was to read were pointed out to him.

"All right," he said, and proceeded to read the lines to himself.

We saw at once that he had taken us in most effectually, and accepted our defeat amidst roars of laughter. After a good deal more chaff, which carried us on till

nearly one o'clock in the morning, we began to despair of darkness—in fact, it was already beginning to get lighter again, and sunset was turning to sunrise; so, one by one, we retired, and climbed into our berths, and soon a chorus of snores proclaimed the triumph of tired nature.

The following morning, after another swim in the cold blue water, we hurried on shore for a parting look at the little town. From the ship we saw numbers of women by the water's edge, engaged in covering the rocks with what appeared to be freshly-washed linen, spread out to dry. On nearing the shore, however, we found that they were innumerable fish (almost the only export from the islands), being prepared for the Scotch, English, and Spanish markets. The fish are split open, quite flat, and then stacked in layers, with heavy stones on the top of the stack to press them; and whenever fine weather appears these stacks are taken down, and the fish laid out separately on the rocks to dry in the sun. We went into the town, and after bidding good-bye to two of our fellow-passengers, whom we were leaving here, intent upon the splendid fishing which is to be got in the islands, and whom we now found at breakfast in their little wooden lodging, we went to the house of a most hospitable Faroese gentleman—Sysselman Müller—and spent some time examining his large collection of stuffed birds, eggs, and other curiosities, as well as a large number of photographs of the most interesting spots among the islands. But we were suddenly startled in our inspection by the boom of a gun from the *Diana*, warning us that the hour for our departure was at hand, and we soon found ourselves engaged in eating a hearty breakfast in her little cabin.

About ten o'clock we steamed out of the little bay, in sunshine as bright as that which had greeted our arrival, and with scarcely a breath of wind to ripple the surface of the water. This unruffled calm, however, was but temporary; for on rounding the southern point of Stromoe, we found that a stiff north-west breeze was blowing on the other side of the island, which increased as we proceeded. The captain, however, thought that it would moderate before morning; and not wishing to waste coal by steaming all night against a head wind, he determined to put in at Westmanshavn, there to wait and see.

Leaving Kirkeboe on our right, we passed through Hestoe Fiord, upon which we had looked down the day before; and getting a good view of the crystal-shaped island of Kolter from the east, we entered the southern end of Westmanshavn Fiord. The cliffs on either hand were most magnificent, utterly defying description; and we were particularly struck with the Devil's Finger, at the southern point of the island of Waagoe. This is a pinnacle of rock, standing out quite detached, except at its base, from the face of the cliff, like some gigantic church spire, and apparently totally inaccessible; but the pilot, whom we had taken on board at Thorshavn, told us that, six or seven years ago, a man had actually succeeded in scaling it. He must have been a most accomplished cragsman, with nerves of iron. On entering the fiord, the sea became smooth almost immediately; and when we turned to the right into the bay of Westmanshavn, which is completely landlocked, and, I should think, one of the most perfect shelters in the world, the water was like glass.

The anchor being down, not a moment was lost in jumping into a boat and rowing ashore, as we were intent on seeing as much as possible of these charming islands. Westmanshavn is not a town, scarcely even a village, consisting only of three or four houses, at some distance from one another, and a small store of imported coal, stacked for the use of passing vessels. The bay is surrounded by steep terraced hills, with here and there a cleft or small narrow valley, from which a stream makes its way by a succession of leaps and cascades into the bay beneath. One of the largest of these streams we determined to explore, and followed it up along the left bank for some distance, through a most charming grassy valley, till we were suddenly pulled up by the sight of a somewhat dangerous-looking bull, which stood bellowing right in our path.

One or two of our party boldly advanced; but, as the bull proceeded to do the same, there was a general stampede to the other side of the stream—which was crossed in a most agile manner, only one individual missing his footing, and getting a cool foot-bath. The bull, having put us to flight, calmly began to graze again; while we sat down, chaffed one another for running away, and insulted our enemy from a safe distance. He took no notice of us,

however, except when challenged to fight by furious bellowing from our side of the stream; but he soon discovered the imposition, and after that nothing would move him, so we resumed our walk.

After following the stream for a considerable distance, we struck off to the left, up towards a col, which we could see some way above; and, on reaching which, a splendid scene was spread suddenly before us. There was a foreground of rolling hill, falling to the Westmanshavn Fiord, of which we could only see a part; and then came the island of Waagoe, with its bold headlands stretching away far into the Northern Ocean. The clouds—which, since we had made our appearance on the western side of the islands, had been rather low and threatening—were now beginning to break, and the mountains of Waagoe were lit up here and there, in a most striking manner, with bright gleams of sunshine. Beyond, to the north-west, there was a vast expanse of sea, without a speck or sail of any sort upon it; and there lay our course for the morrow, and the wished-for shores of Iceland.

To our surprise, there was hardly any wind at the top of the col, although it was quite exposed to the north-west; and, as far as we could distinguish from our elevated position, the sea appeared to be tolerably calm. Taking into consideration these circumstances, and the fact that the captain had not yet finally decided to remain all night at Westmanshavn, we made the best of our way down a valley which opened to the left, back to the place where we had landed, and got two men to row us on board again. But, notwithstanding our report of the weather up above, the captain did not seem inclined to make a move that evening; so we jumped into our boat again, and rowed off down the bay, to pay a visit to a couple of English fishing boats which were lying there. They looked wonderfully clean and well kept, and their occupants were very thankful for some English newspapers, a week old, which we were able to give them, as they were ten weeks out from Grimsby, and had never seen a paper all the time. They were parting company next morning—one going back to Shetland, and the other north, to the Iceland shores. Shortly afterwards, they boarded the *Diana* with a present of fish for us, in return for the newspapers; but, unfortunately, we did not

hear of their present until it was too late to thank them for it.

After a good dinner on board, two of us, still wishing to see more of the land, went ashore again at 9.30 p.m. (being still, of course, broad daylight), to investigate another valley at the head of the bay; but we did not go far enough to see very much, and, after having been away about an hour, we returned to the little landing-stage, and looked out for a boat to take us on board again.

Presently we saw the ship's steward, getting provisions for our use, and he said that he would take us in his boat if we would wait for a few minutes. So we sat down on the boards until he made his appearance again, followed by two or three men, laden with various provisions for the use of the ship—notably, several bundles of macaroni, consisting of tubes seven or eight inches long and nearly half an inch in diameter (interior measurement). Besides these, there were two live sheep to be put on board, destined to appear again upon the cabin table in the shape of mutton. These sheep were rather awkward customers, and the difficulty of getting them into the boat was only exceeded by the difficulty of getting them out of it again, and on board the ship.

At last, one was safely deposited upon the deck, and the attention of the spectators was turned to the other; but, meanwhile, No. 1, left to itself, appeared to have misgivings as to the fate in store for it, and quickly made its way down a long passage to the stern of the ship, where, leaping upon a box, it considerably startled some passengers who were enjoying their evening smoke, and who were unaware of the presence of such a creature on the ship; and thence, taking in the situation at a glance, it leaped upon the bulwarks, and, without further hesitation, plunged overboard into the water, and swam for dear life towards the nearest promontory. The alarm was immediately given, and the steward, who had by this time got rid of sheep No. 2, gave chase to the fugitive, and an exciting race ensued.

If the animal once reached the shore, further pursuit would be hopeless, and it would soon be out of danger; but though the sheep swam well, the steward's boat went faster, and at last the fugitive was overtaken, and, after a severe struggle, safely landed by the steward in the bottom of the boat without a capsize.

The return of the prodigal was the signal for a general break-up of the party on deck, and we were soon all fast asleep in our berths.

On turning out at six a.m. next morning, we found ourselves rapidly emerging from the Westmanshavn Fiord, and we were soon in sight of Myling Head, the northernmost point of the Island of Stromoe, a cliff falling sheer 2,100 feet into the sea. We were too far off, however, fully to appreciate its tremendous height; but a most magnificent headland it certainly appeared, in the form of a sharp peak, sloping rapidly away to the south. The sea now became a good deal rougher, and the attendance at breakfast-time was very limited; but overhead it continued bright all day, and the sun was very hot; and at midnight we turned in with numbers of puffins, gulls, and other sea birds asleep on the water about us, or wheeling round the ship, and following in her wake. The wind and sea had fallen, and we managed to get a good night's rest, and rose next morning able fully to enjoy the gorgeous view which greeted us on leaving the cabin.

We were stirred up pretty early, as the vessel was rolling a good deal, and it was a matter of some difficulty to remain in one's berth. Soon, one of our party, leaving the cabin, quickly returned with the welcome news that the land was in sight; and after this we did not waste much time over our toilettes, and were soon all standing on the bridge, in the cold morning air, with glasses of all shapes and sizes, looking eagerly northward. And the sight we saw was indeed magnificent. We were still some fifty miles or so from land; but we could distinctly see a long line of jagged black peaks, of most fantastic shapes, above and beyond which tremendous fields of snow, with here and there a sharp summit shooting up, ran back inland, and stretched away far to our left, till they were lost in haze and indistinctness.

Breakfast was quickly despatched, when its time came, and we were soon on deck again with maps and glasses, trying to identify the more conspicuous landmarks as we drew nearer to the shore, and the view became gradually less extensive, but more detailed. The immense snow-fields of the Vatna Jökull, which gradually enclosed us on the left, especially excited our attention and curiosity.

We were thus fully employed until eleven o'clock, soon after which hour we passed Papey Island tolerably close on our left. It is a small, low-lying, rocky island, on which we could distinguish a few sheep, one or two huts, and a good deal of grass; but nothing more, except the sea birds, which now surrounded us on every side, and absolutely whitened the cliffs with their numbers.

The little island is said to derive its name from the fact that long ago, before the main land was inhabited at all, a number of Irish monks settled in this out-of-the-way place, and called the little island after the Pope (Papa).

We were now at the entrance to Berufjord, on the east coast of Iceland, where the mail steamer calls on its way to and from Reykjavik, weather permitting. I say weather permitting, not without reason, for we had on board two Icelandic students, who had left Reykjavik in the *Diana* on her last trip, with the intention of going as far as Berufjord only; but when they arrived off Papey Island, the weather was so bad that they were unable to enter the fiord—the navigation at the entrance of which is rather difficult—or to communicate with the shore; and, after standing off for two days, in hopes of the weather moderating, they were obliged to continue the voyage with our two students still on board. They were carried on to Copenhagen, and were now on their way back to Iceland, after their involuntary journey to Europe.

About noon, we found ourselves lying to off Djupivogur, a little village at the entrance to the fiord, where we put off passengers and mails for Berufjord, which lies quite at the head of the inlet. The captain would not allow us to land here, as he was anxious to get out of the fiord again as soon as possible, lest fog should come on; so we had to content ourselves with admiring the prospect, talking to one or two natives who came on board, and watching the loading and unloading of cargo.

The view from the spot where the vessel lay was very striking, and exactly the one which some of my readers may have seen in the *Illustrated London News* in the autumn of 1872. This picture struck me as being very faithful, but did not seem to give sufficient idea of height and grandeur in the mountains. Towering up above the village of Djupivogur was a gigantic pyramid of black volcanic

rock, so regular in shape as to make one fancy it had been built in ancient days by some Scandinavian giant; while beyond it, peak behind peak closed in the head of the fiord, and on the other side rose a sharp, saw-like ridge, equally black and arid-looking, with here and there a peak of such extraordinary shape, that it seemed every moment as though the next must see it thundering down into the valley below.

By the time we had quite taken in this panorama, the ship's head was again turned seaward, and we steamed slowly out of the fiord, and turning to the south-west, round Papey Island, we commenced the last stage of the voyage out, consisting of a day and a half's coasting round the southern side of Iceland.

By the time we were fairly under way, it was getting late, and about ten o'clock we had a splendid sunset behind the mysterious Vatna Jökull, with Orefa Jökull (the highest mountain in Iceland) on our starboard bow.

ANGUISH IN PRINT.

IN THE STRICTEST CONFIDENCE.

TEAR THE EIGHTEENTH.

DISAPPOINTMENT.

I WROTE and told Achilles all my plans, using the top of the drawers for a writing desk, and letting Patty Smith think that I was doing an exercise; for I was so horribly deceitful, writing upon exercise paper, and referring now and then to dictionary and grammar, as if for different words. I told him he was to get hooks made that would fit over the inside of the window-sill, and he was to buy a rope ladder, and I would let down a string and draw it up, and hook it on, when he could easily run up and stand upon the great, wide cornice beneath the second floor windows—a large, ornamental cornice that ran nearly round the house—and there stop and talk to me whenever it was a dark night.

I soon managed, through Clara, for him to have the note; and the next time he came he was quite radiant with joy, and praised all the girls' exercises, though some of them were really execrable. I would not look at him, but soon after he was gone Clara slipped a note into my hand, which said that he would be under the window that night at half-past twelve, and that I was

to be sure and have a ball of string ready to let down and draw up the ladder, which he had been obliged to make himself; for though he could buy rope enough everywhere in London, there was not such a thing as a rope ladder to be got.

"There, I told you so," said Clara, laughing. "Rope ladder, indeed. I don't believe people ever did sell such things; and you see now if he don't stick half-way up, like a great fly in a spider's web, till Lady Blunt comes, as the spider, and sticks a great knitting needle into his body to kill him. And then she'll call all the other spiders, and all four of them will set to and devour your poor Achille—for they are almost ready to eat him every day, as it is."

"Don't talk such stuff," I said pettishly, though I could not help thinking of Miss Furness and her penchant for Achille, though I knew he hated her.

It did sound so romantic and chivalrous, in spite of Clara's ill-natured prattle, having one's lover coming up a ladder of ropes in the stilly midnight hour, when all were dreaming around. It put me in mind of ladies' bowers, and knights, and cavaliers, and elopements; and dreaming, as I did, I almost began to fancy myself a damsel in distress about to be rescued; and I stood there, in our room, in such a sweet, rapt meditation—such a blissful, dreamy, musing fit—when that Clara brought me right down out of the I don't know how manyeth heaven, by saying—

"And where's your string?"

And really I had not thought of that, and it was a puzzle. I had plenty of crochet cotton, and bobbin, and Berlin wool; but then, they were none of them strong enough. Time to buy any, there was none, for he was coming that night loaded with his dear ladder; while if I tried to get any from the kitchen, some one would be sure to ask what it was wanted for, when what could I say? And, besides, I had told so many dreadful stories already, and prevaricated so much, that I was quite ashamed.

The first thing I determined upon was to make a long plait of my coloured wools; but I soon found that there would not be one quarter enough; then I thought of the girls' slate strings, which held the sponges, and determined to make a raid into the school-room and cut them all off, though I felt sure they would not be enough. If I could only have gone out and bought a ball, or

sent James, it would have been all right; but that was impossible without first asking Mrs. Blunt. Only the week before, a stupid boy's kite came flapping over into the garden, with no end of string, which I might have cut off with my scissors; but I never imagined then that I should want any.

However, I did what I generally do when I want to think deeply, I took some eau de Cologne and bathed my temples, and then sat down before the glass, with my hair all thrown back, and my head resting upon my hand, trying to solve the problem, and wondering what Achille could see in me to like; while just then I remember wondering what had become of poor Mr. St. Purre.

What was I to do? that was the question. I might have cut ever so many strings off my clothes, but then I was sure they would not make half enough; and, after boring my poor brains all sorts of ways, I was quite in despair—for it did seem too bad to be put off by such a beggarly little trifle as a bit of string, when two or three of those little, cheating, penny balls, that are made so big by winding a very little string round a very big hole, would have set me up for good. I wanted Clara to smuggle the clothes line from the laundry, which would have done admirably; but the nasty thing would not, but tried to make fun of it all by declaring that it was in use; and she would not stir a peg. I could not go myself to see if what she said was true—at least, I dare not; and, there, if it was not tea-time, and we should be rung down in a few minutes. Once I thought of tearing up something into long shreds, and tying them together; and it seemed at last that that would be the plan, and I should have put it into execution, if all at once I had not had a bright thought flash through my head, and felt disposed to call out "Excelsior!" like mamma did when she saw Mrs. Blunt's horrid advertisement, and meant "Eureka" all the time.

And what do you think the happy thought was? Why, the lumber-room, where the girls' school boxes were put, along with their cords; and I was just going to hurry off and collect a number, when clatter went the tea bell, and we were obliged to go down.

I could not eat any of their odious bread and butter—thick and patchy—while the tea was as weak as weak. I declare I was so nervous that I never felt the place to be so vexatious before; and for the least provo-

cation I should have burst out crying. I couldn't help there being nothing to cry about—all I know is, that I felt in a regular crying fit; and the more of the nasty, mawkish warm tea I drank, the worse I felt, for it all seemed changed into tears directly, and to be flooding my head; when, if it had been proper tea, of course my poor nerves would have been solaced.

Clara saw how put out I was, and kept treading on my foot, wanting me to look at Mrs. Blunt's front, which was all put on sideways; but I declare I could not have laughed if she had put it on backwards. Then that stupid Miss Sloman must go seeing that I did not eat anything, and tell Mrs. Blunt; and, of course, when she asked me, I was obliged to say that I was not quite well, when the tiresome old thing must promise to send for Dr. Boole if I were not better in the morning. A stupid old thing; she did not know that a dozen yards of good stout string would have made me feel quite in ecstasy.

Bed-time at last; and, as a matter of course, because we wanted her to go to sleep soon, Patty Smith began to write a letter home for another cake and a bottle of currant wine; but Miss Furness must come prowling about and see the light, and she soon put a stop to that; when poor simple Patty did get such a scolding that she sobbed, and cried, and boo-ood, and said it was only for a cake she was writing. When Miss Furness—a nasty, aggravating old puss—must turn round and scold Clara and me, as she said, for encouraging her, so as to get part of the cake ourselves. Couldn't I have given her a shaking, that's all! Why, it was enough to make any one feel vicious.

At last, we lay there, listening to the different noises dying out in the house; while I could do nothing but cry for poor Achille's disappointment—for the way to the lumber-room was through the one in which the cook slept, and of course it was impossible to get any cord; and I dare not throw a note out of the window to Achille, for fear that he might not find it in the dark, when, if it fell into wrong hands all would have been made known. So there I lay, crying for some time, till the noises in the house one by one died out, and all was still; when I pictured poor Achille watching and waiting, and accusing me of perfidy and cruelty, for making him come and then disappointing

him—for he never would imagine that I had been stopped for want of a piece of string. Then came the sound of a howling owl, hooting and screeching as if in contempt of me for going to bed; and I declare, at last, I was about to creep away to the empty room, and add to the poor fellow's disappointment by opening the window and whistling to him—though I'm sure he could not have heard; when a strong feeling of stupor seemed to creep over me—a feeling that I could not fight against—while soon all was, as it were, a blank; though the next morning when I talked about it to Clara, she only laughed, and said it showed how much I cared for him to fall asleep. Just as if it was sleep, and I did not know the difference. But, there, she always was so absurd! And poor Achille was disappointed, and we had to make another assignation.

TEAR THE NINETEENTH.

A FALSE ALARM.

NIGHT again; and Achille—poor faithful, charitable, patient Achille—to be there, once more watching in the dark that one blank window, that he hoped to see open. I could analyze his feelings as well, perhaps, as he could mine; and how I did pity him for his many disappointments! for nights and nights had passed without the rope ladder having been made available. Still, though, we were hopeful, and thought of others who had been long and patient sufferers for the same cause; while now, in the hope of a meeting, we waited once more. All was still within doors, and everything seemed propitious, for the night was excessively dark. The last door had shut some time before, and within the house the only thing stirring must have been a mouse, or else, with our strained ears, as Clara and I lay waiting, dressed in bed, we must have heard it. But though all was so still in the house, it was not so out of doors. First of all there was a horrible cat “tuning its lay,” as Clara called it; and then she said its lay was terribly out of tune to want so much screwing up. Then the dog in the next yard must hear it, and begin to resent the disturbance, and bark at the cat, till I felt sure that pauvre Achille would not come, for the noise was dreadful—rest cat, bark dog; rest dog, howl cat; and so on. There was the chain rattling in and out of the kennel at a most terrible rate, while the

creature barked furiously till it was tired, without having the slightest effect upon the cat, or cats, which kept on with the hideous howling, till the dog, evidently worn out, went to sleep.

Oh, it was uncomfortable lying there, so hot and tired with the exertion of dressing under the bed-clothes while lying down, so that Patty Smith should have no suspicion of what was going on, and because we thought her awake; when, just as we had finished, she must begin to snore in the most vulgar, horrible way imaginable.

"That nasty cat is just under our window," I whispered to Clara. "He'll never come if there's this noise."

"I'll serve it out," whispered Clara; "only be quiet."

"What are you going to do?" I said, but she would not answer; and I heard her get out of bed and go to the washstand, and pour ever so much water into the basin.

"Oh, what are you going to do?" I said again; "pray don't make any noise, dear. What are you going to do with that water?"

"Wait a bit, and you'll see," she whispered, tittering; and then she went and gently opened the window, when the noise of the nasty cat came up worse than ever.

"You had better not throw out that water, dear," I whispered; but she only giggled, and then I heard the water go down splash on to the gravel walk, and directly after—

"Oh!" exclaimed Clara, "it was soapy!" while as she spoke came up the sounds of the falling basin, as it struck upon the gravel walk, and was shivered to atoms. Then came the sound of a hurried step upon the gravel, the rush of a heavy body through the shrubbery, all as plain as could be in the still night, and I knew that Clara had very nearly thrown the basin on poor Achilles's head, and it might have killed him; when as if that was not enough to frighten him away, there were two windows thrown open on the first floor, and at one was Miss Furness, ringing a bell and Miss Sloman screaming, and at the other my Lady Blunt, springing a watchman's rattle, and making the most horrible din imaginable.

"Well, I really did not mean to do it, dear," said Clara, as coolly as could be; "you see, the basin was soapy, and slipped."

"What did you do it at all for, when you were asked not?" I gasped, angrily; for it

was really enough to drive any one out of her senses to be disappointed like this, time after time. All I hoped was, that poor Achilles had escaped safely, and did not know from which window the missile came; for, only fancy, he might have thought that I had thrown it, and never forgiven me.

You never could have imagined such a disturbance to have proceeded from so small a cause. There were doors opening and shutting, girls screaming, bells ringing; and there we all were, at last, trembling and shaking upon the staircase and landings—all but Patty Smith, who would not get out of bed.

"Dere's de police!" exclaimed the Fraulein, all at once; and directly after we could hear Mrs. Blunt and Miss Furness talking to some one out of their windows; while now there was a profound silence fallen upon the shivering group, while I shuddered as I recognized the deep-toned voice out of doors, and knew it to be that of one familiar with the interior of the grounds.

"Search the garden thoroughly, policeman," cried Mrs. Blunt, from one window.

"Who's there?" squealed Miss Furness, loudly.

"Why, it's me, mum," said the policeman.

"Oh, yes—I know, my good man," said Miss Furness; "but I mean who was out there?"

"I'm agoing to look, aint I?" growled the man. "But there aint nobody out here now, even if there was at all. I aint seen anybody in the road."

And I did feel so glad to hear what he said, for I was all in a shiver lest my poor boy should be caught.

"He's gone, mum," said the low fellow, after he had been away about five minutes. "Aint not a soul 'cept me in the garding. What had he been up to, mum?"

"Oh, it was a dreadful noise out there," cried Mrs. Blunt, from behind the curtains. "It sounded like some one smashing in the dining-room windows. Pray look, policeman."

All this conversation sounded so plain to us on the stairs, for Mrs. Blunt's door and window were both open; and then I could hear the policeman's heavy step on the gravel, crunching and screeching as he trod on and began kicking about the pieces of Clara's broken basin.

"Why here's some one been shying the



chayney outer window. That's what you heard," said the policeman. "Here's most half a wash-hand basin and a whole stadge of bits squandered all over the gravel walk. That's what you heard, mum. The winders is right enough."

"It did sound like that," squeaked Miss Furness, out of the window.

"And that's what it was, mum, if there was none of this here out afore."

"Oh, no, my good man," cried Mrs. Blunt, getting less fearful and more dignified every moment—"the paths were quite clear this evening."

"Then it's some of your young ladies been a havin' a lark," said the bad fellow.

And then I turned round to whisper to Clara, but she was gone. Directly after, though, she slipped back to my side, and I whispered to her, laying my hand upon her arm—

"Had you not better tell? Say that it was an accident."

"Hold your tongue," she whispered, pinching me.

And then we shrank into the background, for I was afraid some one would notice how bulky our dressing gowns looked; for of course we had not had time to undress again.

Then we heard the policeman promise to keep an eye on the place, and to call in the morning. Then we heard his footsteps on the gravel, and the pieces of china cracking, windows shut down, and orders for us to go back to our rooms, as there was nothing to fear; when, as we were ascending the stairs, Mrs. Blunt's nightcapped head was thrust out of the door, and we heard her exclaim—

"I'll investigate this disgraceful trick in the morning, young ladies."

I trembled for poor Clara—almost as much as I did for Achille; for it seemed as though the poor girl was always to act as scapegoat; though, certainly, she really deserved to be in disgrace this time, for I begged her most earnestly not to throw out the water.

I would have given Clara half my basin with pleasure, if I could; but then, that would have been of no service. Judge, then, of my surprise when, after looking at Patty, fast asleep as if nothing had been the matter, I turned to Clara's washstand: there was her basin, safe and sound, while the jug was standing in it!

As we upon the second floor all had small washstands and jugs and basins of the same pattern, I thought that, after all, she had taken mine; but she had not, nor yet Patty's; and as she saw what I was looking at, she burst out laughing, and said—

"I slipped up and into the Fraulein's room, and took hers; and now they may find out if they can. Of course, you won't tell, darling?"

I felt so cross that I was ready to say I would; for I was disappointed, and the thoughts of the meeting had taken away my appetite; while, now that it was not to be, I felt as hungry as possible. But it would have been cruel to have said anything, so of course I promised.

"Another disappointment for the poor French Verb," whispered Clara, laughing.

"For shame," I said, "to speak in so disrespectful a way."

"But it does not much matter," she said; "for he would have been sure to have been afraid to climb up, when he found out really how high it was."

"Don't talk stuff!" I said; "he would get up if it were twice as high, for my sake. Why, look how Leander swam the Hellespont."

"And, I say," said Clara—laughing, and seeming in the highest of glee, which was too bad—"how cold and shivering he must have been when he got across. Bo-o-o-h!" she said, shuddering, "what a cold frog of a lover! I shouldn't have liked that."

"No," I said, "you have no romance in your composition."

"Haven't I?" she said, "you don't know; but I'm not so head over ears in love as you are."

"Perhaps not," I said, spitefully; "because you had no chance."

"Pooh!" said Clara. "Why, I might have had Achille long before you came, if I had liked."

"Perhaps, miss," I exclaimed, with nothing more than reasonable anger, "the next time you mention that gentleman's name you will prefix the Monsieur."

"Certainly, ma'am," said Clara, aggravating me with her mock courtesy.

"And whatever you do," I said, "if you must tease, tell the truth."

"That was the truth," she replied.

"Don't be such a wicked story," I exclaimed. "I don't believe it, miss."

And I could not help thinking, after, that

in my childish anger I had made use of childish language.

"I don't care what you believe and what you don't believe," said Clara, coolly; "and I've got—"

"If you young ladies are not silent this minute," said Miss Furness, outside the door, "I shall be compelled to summon Mrs. de Blount."

And then, as I lay wondering whether she had heard anything of our conversation, and what it was that Clara had got, and whether it was a letter Achille had sent her before I came, which I did not believe, and did not much care if he had, for he had not seen me then—Miss Furness stood listening at the door, while Clara would not answer my whispered questions, pretending to be offended; and I believe I heard Miss Furness sniff out in the cold passage just as I dropped off asleep.

BULLIONDUST'S SECRETARY.

CHAPTER II.

"GOING up to town?" asks the Honourable Percy Dawdle of Beauvoir Delmington, as they meet upon the platform at the Sunnyside station upon the L. and N.-W. R.

"No, I'm waiting for the train which leaves Euston at 5.30. I expect a man who lends me money. I've asked him to the Hall, as I want another thousand; and nothing flatters a genteel money-lender more than to introduce him to the women of one's family."

"I wish you'd get him to do a bit of stiff for me, Beauvoir."

"Thanks, I can break him myself," and the two youths laughed immoderately.

The train arrived at the station, and disgorged, amongst others, Mr. John James Bulliondust and Mr. Sydney Ruthven.

The eminent contractor was attired in a very light, greyish-coloured coat, turned over with quilted silk of the same shade, braided and surmounted with a white velvet collar; the folds of his crimson scarf were held together by a diamond pin, and his blue figured satin waistcoat shone in the freshness of its newness. In strange contrast to the upper portions of his dress, his lower limbs were draped in black cloth trousers—self-made men always wear black trousers—and his singularly uneven feet encased in

patent leather boots; whilst his hands were rammed and jammed into light green kid gloves about two sizes too small for them.

Mr. Sydney Ruthven was arrayed in the same seedy attire as before; but, somehow or other, looked like Lord Mulligatawny or Plantagenet Pierrepont "got up" for the part of Jeremy Diddler for amateur theatricals.

"Ah, Bowvoy, how goes it? Here I am, as punctual as this cursed train will let me—three minutes late. Too bad. They don't care a dump for a man's time."

Here he pulled out a showy-looking watch, and pendulated it beneath the gaze of all whom it might or might not concern.

"Glad to see you, Bulliondust. Where's your luggage?" exclaimed Delmington, anxious to get him out of the gangway.

"Oh, here it is. I always take it in the same carriage, because I always carry a great deal of value. You, sir," addressing a porter, "be very particular about that portmanteau and that dressing case. I wouldn't lose 'em for five hundred pound."

They were proceeding in the direction of the trap, which was waiting at the door of the station, when the contractor remembered that he had not introduced his secretary.

"This is Mr. Sydney Ruthven, my secretary—could not do without *him*, so I brought him."

Mr. Delmington looked very hard at Ruthven's face and beard, then at his garments, and lastly at his boots; and finding him not worth noticing, said, curtly enough—

"How do?"

And wondered why the deuce Bulliondust employed so disreputable-looking a scrivener; wondered why the deuce he dignified him with the name of secretary; wondered how he should be treated, whether as a servant or an equal—*i.e.*, an equal with his employer.

The trap was constructed to hold two.

What was to be done with the scarecrow secretary?

This was a difficulty.

"I shall walk," observed Mr. Sydney Ruthven, cutting the Gordian knot.

"The Hall is nine miles from here," observed Mr. Delmington, with about the same courtesy that he would extend towards a tradesman engaged to execute a job at the Hall, and for whom there was no accommodation beside the coachman, one of the

gentlemen of the party having engaged the box seat.

"So much the better—I like a walk."

"We dine at eight. Isn't it eight?" asked Mr. Bulliondust.

"Eight o'clock," was the sententious reply.

"Don't be much after it, for ye'll be hungry," observed the contractor to his employé.

He was always liberal with the goods and chattels of others.

"I've got tuppence," said Sydney Ruthven gaily, chucking the coins into the air, and dexterously catching them again, "and I shall dine en route and en prince."

The natural assumption is that the majority of well-informed people know to a nicety what a glorious summer's evening means, commencing with "the sun had sunk to rest in golden splendour," and ending with "the drowsy silence, awakened only by the distant notes of the melodious night-ingle." Of course, there was the pale crescent of a moon; and, of course, the murmur of the silvery river was soothing, and insensibly bore away the thoughts of a young man with a yellow beard, who reclined beside its rippling waters—away to the fathomless ocean of the morrow, as against the yesterday, and again the morrow, and yet again the morrow.

Sydney Ruthven lay upon the grass, and plucked tufts of it, and threw them into the stream. He gazed into the shadow of his past life, and enjoyed the bitter voluptuousness of coming face to face with thoughts and reflections that were blacker than the pool under the adjacent ivy-covered bridge.

"How long is it to last?" he moaned. "When will the hour of acquittance come?"

In the agony of his spirit, he hurled an immense stone into the river, as though the action were typical of the removal of the crushing weight at his heart, and sprang to his feet. The plunge of the stone into the water, in the stillness of the night, caused a noisy splash.

A short, sharp woman's scream!

He turned rapidly round, and found himself confronted by a female, enveloped in white, gauzy garments.

"Who are you?" she palpitated. "What brings you here? I'll call for help."

Instantly his greasy hat was in his hand.

"Do not be alarmed. I am clerk, scribe,

anything you like, to a person of the name of Bulliondust, stopping at the house yonder; and have to apologise that my presence came upon you so suddenly as to cause you alarm." And he added, laughingly, "Not but that you owe me something, too; for I imagined I was in the presence of the supernatural."

The young lady—for she was young—was trembling violently, and her teeth were chattering like castanets.

What should Sydney Ruthven do?

Well, he did this.

He offered the quivering apparition his arm, led her in the direction of the Hall, adroitly turning the subject of the splash into ridicule, informing her that it arose from the dropping of the keystone of the arch of his castle in Spain into the river; and finally by the time they had reached the terrace in front of the grand entrance, Mr. Sydney Ruthven—whose garments, by moonlight, looked as though they were by Poole, or some other R.A. in cloth—had caused the fluttering of the heart beside him to cease, and its possessor to refer to the recent episode in terms indicative of—well, decidedly not of annoyance, or of regret either.

How much can be said in ten minutes by moonlight, by a gentleman to a lady—especially if the gentleman be well-bred, handsome, and clever, and the lady young, and wan, and lovely!

He said a great deal, warm as the summer's night.

She said a great deal, soft as the silvery moonbeams.

Suddenly he paused.

Suddenly she paused.

The rose link snapped: stern reality pulled it asunder. She was the daughter of Mr. Beauvoir Delmington, of Healdon Hall; and he was—well, the clerk of a beastly vulgar, gilded navy, who was there upon sufferance, accompanied by his pen and ink valet. Yes, a literal translation is occasionally necessary for a beginner. And this was what the probe laid bare.

She withdrew her soft hand from his arm.

"Good evening, sir," she said, in glacial tones; "it is getting chilly."

And she swept into the house.

The ice was at his heart.

He entered Healdon Hall, and asked for Mr. Bulliondust. That worthy personage

had been enjoying the good things of this life, and they had culminated in a hiccough.

"He's in the billiard-room, and yer to go up," said the servant, semi-contemptuously.

"I will not go up. Where is my room?" demanded Mr. Secretary Ruthven.

"Your room?"

"Yes, my room. Just you find it out at once," exclaimed the secretary, in a tone which switched the astonished menial on to the main line at once.

In a few minutes, Mr. Bulliondust, accompanied by Mr. Beauvoir Delmington, staggered into the room.

"Why the devil didn't you come up?" exclaimed Mr. Bulliondust.

"Because I wish to go to bed."

"Go to the devil (hic). Come up and have a game at billiards," said the contractor, maintaining his equilibrium by leaning affectionately upon the shoulder of his host.

"Have you had anything to eat?" asked the latter gentleman.

"Yes, thanks," was the reply.

And turning to his employer, Ruthven asked him if he required his services.

"Not p'ticularly; but come, and I'll show you (hic) the house. Come and have a B. and S. in the billiard-room—lots of splendid women, sir."

And the eminent contractor winked like a drunken satyr.

Now, whether it was to rid himself of the vulgar Bulliondust, or to enjoy a laugh at the expense of the seedy scrivener, it is not for this veracious history to reveal; but certain it is that Mr. Beauvoir Delmington assumed a courtesy that he was far from feeling, and pressed Ruthven to accompany him to the billiard-room, and have a B. and S. and a weed.

"You need not be afraid of the women-kind—they don't haunt that sanctum sanctorum once the baccy has been lighted up."

It would have been more dignified of our hero to have coldly declined, to have returned to his bed-room, and to have exchanged his threadbare garments for the luxurious linen and wool appertaining to the sleeping apartments of Healdon Hall; to have lain upon the broad of his back, and to have thanked his lucky stars—fate, destiny, kismet—for granting him so luxurious a bed in so splendid a château. Yes, he should have done this, instead of yielding

to a cursed silken whisper that came stealing up from his heart to his brain—a cheap "twenty words a shilling" telegram, a weak invention of the enemy—bidding him, in violet accents, to hie to the billiard-room, and that some lucky cast of the dice would send—ah, poor humanity!—Miss Delmington across his path. Oh, for one glance of her eye, one touch of her white robe!

Thus it commences. Thus does Master Cupid baste the fatted veal ere he devours it.

The apartment devoted to that most seductive of games was, as it need be, a very spacious one. It paid the double debt of picture gallery and billiard-room.

BOBBING FOR WHALES.

"WHA-A-A-T, lad?"

"Eh, John! Thou mun go a-fishin' like the rest on 'em?"

I did not hear the rest of the conversation, for half a dozen "gentlemen" interposed. We were all spoken of as "gentlemen," though I am bound to say that not one of us looked our part. In fact, if we had been assembled on the banks of the Serpentine, supercilious loungers would have spoken of us as "cads."

But we were not on the banks of the Serpentine, our location being the towing-path of the Keadby Canal, alias the River Dun navigation, and the greater part of us had been disgorged by one of the South Yorkshire Railway Company's trains—said railway being an economical line, constructed on the banks of the canal, as rail superseded water ways, and running from Sheffield, past Doncaster and Thorne, to cross the Trent by great swing bridges, and then onward to North Lincolnshire and the Humber.

Our halting place was Crowle Wharf—here called "Crool Wa-a-a-arf"—and we were gathered a day or two since for competition in an angling match for £100, divided into about 140 prizes, the highest being £25, and the lowest being, if I remember rightly, a corkscrew.

We were about 500 strong, and decidedly motley. The South Yorkshire towns had all sent their contingent, and notable among them were the Sheffield men. There was a goodly mingling also of Lincolnshire men, for this gathering in the Isle of Axholme is a great attraction for the Izaak Waltons of

the district; and apart from the noisy, out-for-the-spre working men of the manufacturing towns, there were quiet old angling stagers, with fascies of rods in jean bags, and baskets of tackle and ground bait hanging over the shoulder, in company with great landing nets large enough to land Tay salmon.

How it did rain! Pending arrangements made to get the rather unruly crew in order, I had a glance round at the country, which was flat; and, as the geography books say, principal products great drains of sluggish, amber-hued bog water; potatoes, grown largely for the London market upon the warp land; and what is here called "line"—the plant of the linseed, otherwise flax.

Looking back along the railway, one saw how nicely it was arranged, so that if the carriages left the line they ran into the Keadby Canal on one side, on the other into a great drain, almost as big.

But now came the summons to our posts—literally posts, pegs driven down into the bank at intervals of so many yards, thus marking out each fisherman's ground, upon which no neighbour could trespass; and, after a great deal of trouble, each man was got to his place, lots being drawn for numbers, and the fishing party stretching, it seemed to me, miles along the bank.

There were officers appointed to watch that there was no trickery, such as two or three men combining to win a prize—for prizes were given for the heaviest take of fish; and then for so many hours we were free to fish hard, and at a signal began.

Being one of the unlucky ones at fishing, I never anticipated getting a prize; so, after unlimbering, plumbing depth, throwing in my ground bait, and making a start, I devoted my attention to my neighbours, the one on my left being a dry old islander—an Axholmeite. He told me soon that he was a miller, and loved fishing for its own sake, showing me his tackle, fine and carefully kept; and the capital display of baits—maggots, caddis worms, earth worms of four or five different kinds, cooked barley, boiled rice, dough, and wet bran—enough to capture all the fish in the canal.

My right-hand neighbour was a broad, slab-faced Yorkshireman, a potato buyer on commission for the Borough Market, and as rough in tongue and appearance as one of his own Rocks or York Regents.

"Darned them keels!" he exclaimed,

loudly; "they'll 'sturb the waat-ter so as we shan't get a brim!"

"Them keels" were the swift sailing barges on their way to the Trent and Humber, dispensing with horses in the brisk breeze, and, in the distance, seeming, with their high amber sails, to be skimming in a winding course over the flat fields of the Dutch water-soaked landscape.

The game began with my potato neighbour getting a bite, and laughing boisterously as, with his rather coarse tackle, he landed a good-sized bream; while Izaak Walton, the miller, on my left, after care, silence, and patient watching, with the rain streaming down his oil-skinned back, obtained his bite, struck, and landed, with an angry "Pish!" a fierce, pugnacious-looking little fish, about three inches long, apparently a cross between a loose-minded perch and a wanton gudgeon.

"Yow! he's nobbut a Tommy Ruff!" shouted Potatoes.

"A wish yow'd howd thee tongue!" growled Izaak, and he baited and threw in again; while, after catching half a dozen small roach and bream, I sauntered right and left to see and hear.

Some were fishing diligently, determinate of a prize; others had come more for the day out, and beering and smoking scented the air more than did the peculiar odour of the fresh-caught fish. Others, again, gave the matter up in stolid despair, crouching under great umbrellas, and providing for the inner man with large hunches of bread and meat; and one friendly, hospitable fellow pressed me to join him in discussing some "home baked" and "slip-coat," the "slip-coat" turning out to be cream cheese of rather a pronounced type.

As a rule, the sport was nil, only a lucky man here and there taking a fish; and, after seeing laws and regulations broken half a score of times, I sauntered back, to find that Izaak had had better luck, and had also kindly landed a bream that had been stupid enough to hook itself on my line in my absence.

Speaking to my old neighbour of what I had seen, and of the match generally—

"Eh, lad," he said, "the fishing here's nowt to what it was in my day. Then a man might come and take his ten or twenty pound of fish; but, tchah! it's no use to come out with a noisy lot like this here."

As he spoke, he stared hard at the York

Regent man; but the latter was watching his float, evidently puzzled between bites and bobbings caused by the wavelets and the wind.

"They net the river from the keels as they go up and down," continued the miller; "and if I hadn't a bit of private fishin' in the Participants' drains, the place wouldn't be worth living in."

Like all other matches, this of fishing came to an end—the soaked and fortunate fishers being "weighed in" by the referees; and the luckiest man not reaching four pounds. However, he won his prize, and my friend Izaak also came in for his share.

"What's mine? Nobbut a reel?" he said. "Fishing's good for nowt now; for the river's full of Tommy Ruffs."

ONLY A YEAR.

CHAPTER XV.

"YOU DON'T OFTEN COME HERE, AUNT TIBBY."

MEN usually bear pain or trial less patiently than women; and those of a sensitive, impetuous nature, like Thyrlé, bear it worst of all. Thyrlé had come out of his former trial a better and a nobler man; but now—while Phillis wept, despaired, and submitted—he became reckless, and did anything and everything to drown remembrance and to stifle reflection, glad if by any means he could win the sleep which too often deserted him, and ensure its being so deep and dreamless that he should not be haunted by the dark, false eyes which had deluded him. For Thyrlé believed himself insulted, fooled, mocked at; and the mere thought of Phillis Kyriel seemed to drive him beside himself.

About an hour after Gilfred had left him, on the morning after the Hemsley ball, Thyrlé opened a telegram from Mr. Hutchins, his new steward, which had come the night previous, begging him to come at once to London on a matter of extreme importance. Deeply annoyed at this unwelcome summons, and believing it some fussy nonsense of his new servant, Thyrlé intended to disregard it; but shortly after he arrived at this decision came a still more pressing telegram from Thyrlé's lawyer, to the same effect as the former one; so, with great reluctance he resolved to go at once, and return as soon as possible.

On acquainting Miss Mason with his in-

tentions, she expressed a desire to go also. She had lately heard from Hasson Grainger, and owing to what he said, she did not wish to let her nephew from under her supervision. The cook at Merresford had "given up," she told him, and she wished to make inquiries about a new one at the same office she had applied to before. Thyrlé was thinking too much about his own vexation to take much concern about this, only saying she must be ready to start at ten o'clock. He wrote a note to Phillis, explaining the cause of his unavoidable absence, and expressing his deep regret and disappointment in being thus prevented seeing her. He added—

"I hope to return to-morrow at the latest, and shall come straight to the Manor House; but tell your mother, dearest, of our engagement at once. I detest secrets."

This note Thyrlé gave to a groom, with directions to ride quickly and deliver it at the Manor House forthwith; and he thought it was possible he might receive a word or two in reply before leaving the station at Hallingford.

But Miss Mason had overheard the order given, and intercepted the groom.

"John, your master has sent me for the note he gave you. He does not want it taken to-day, and you need not go to the Manor House. But go to Low Refton, to the mill, and ask about the flour I ordered. If it is ready, tell them to send it at once; and go round by Cousall Farm and bring home three pounds of fresh butter."

This would take him a détour which would occupy at least three or four hours to accomplish, and by that time Thyrlé and she would be safely away. Thyrlé was extremely impatient at Hallingford about the groom's return, but he had to set off before it, according to Miss Mason's calculation. She had hastily opened the note, and gathered all that was necessary from its contents, reserving it for Mr. Granger's ultimate edification.

And now that she had taken the first bold step in this evil course, she found she could never draw back.

Thyrlé wrote again the same day, after he reached town, a longer letter, alluding in it to his note of the morning—just such a letter as would have made Phillis happy and at peace. But Miss Mason was on the alert. Thyrlé had a pleasant little room on

the ground floor of his house in London, where he smoked, read, and wrote his letters. Miss Mason heard him leave this room, open the letter-box, shut it, and go out of the house. Immediately she stole to the box, where letters ready for the post were always deposited, took out the letter to Miss Kyriel from among the others, and, with a guilty start, heard Thyrle at that moment putting his latch-key in the door. She sprang, with the letter in her hand, into the first room she came to—Thyrle's smoking-room, where he had just been writing. She heard him quickly approaching. She saw a drawer open at the side of his escritoire, and, before she could give herself time to think, she dropped the letter in there, and shut the drawer. Thyrle had happened to recollect that he had left this drawer open, and that he had placed there a rough copy of his will, which he had just written, and did not care to leave about. Finding it shut, he was satisfied, and looked at his aunt.

"You don't often come here, Aunt Tibby," he remarked.

"No; I just came to see if the windows were open. The house isn't fit to be seen, what wi' the blacks and the dust."

Thyrle went away again, and Miss Mason forthwith tried to re-open the drawer, but she could not even find where it had been.

This was a misfortune she had little calculated on.

It was a secret drawer, and she wearied herself in vain to find the spring. Not only then, but many a subsequent hour was devoted by her to that inscrutable spring, which baffled all her efforts. The terror she felt of discovery was ample punishment for her treachery and ingratitude to her nephew.

The affair on which Thyrle had been called to town was the recent embezzlement of a considerable sum of his master's money by the steward just dismissed, which threw Mr. Hutchins into an awkward position to commence his duties in, as he had not sufficient cash at his command to continue the works and pay the miners' wages. Thyrle was worried and badgered by his lawyer and the aggrieved steward into saying he would prosecute the offender, if they could find him; and meanwhile the lawyer kept applying to him for documents, signatures, and dates, many of which appeared to Thyrle quite foreign to the subject; and, by various

other little matters, he was detained more than a week.

Each day he had written to Phillis. He had remembered his promise to give her a photograph, so had been taken, and had sent her a copy; but say what he would, or do what he would, he received no reply. At first he fancied her silence a coquettish freak in revenge for his non-appearance; then a doubt, which he had never been able wholly to cast from him, that she had all along been trifling with him—laughing at him, as she had so often done at the love of other men—gained ground in his mind, and chilled him with its aspect of probability. The business on which he had gone to London was over; but his pride would not allow him to go home without a word from her of some kind; he could not stoop to return to her only to be discarded, "like so many other fools have been." His letters were alternately passionate, indignant, and cold; and, at last, he resolved to cease to write at all.

A few days after he arrived at this determination, came Gilfred Kyriel to see him. There was certainly no change in him; and he told about Kittie's wedding, and the coming change of his regiment to Canadian quarters, and was genial and genuine as ever. The words, lately so pleasantly familiar in Thyrle's ears—"Phil," "Kittie," "Mother"—drove the colour from his face in his efforts for self-command; and the package which Phillis herself had wrapped and sealed up was delivered.

"It's something you left at the Manor House," Phil said—"a box or something; you know, I suppose?"

"Yes, I dare say, thank you; it's all right," Thyrle articulated. And for the first time, he was glad to be rid of Gilfred's society.

The return of these diamonds was a convincing proof to Thyrle's mind that Miss Kyriel had made a fool of him; and a hot blush of shame and self-derision crossed his face as he recollected how she had shrunk from his kisses; how she had led him on to confessing all his love for her, while she never would give him one kind word of her own free will. Sweet looks she had been lavish enough with.

"Madman that I was," groaned Thyrle, "to have staked so much upon such paltry chances! Why should I, of all men, have been selected by her in sincerity? Had I

not heard a dozen and more stories about her? What, in the devil's name, possessed me to think that I should fare better than the others?"

He could understand now why she would not allow him to tell Gilfred of their engagement, or to come to the Manor House on the day of the ball. She could wear his jewels, smile in his face, give him her hand, while in her heart she added him to the list of infatuated dupes who had fallen beneath the spell of her beauty. He cursed his own credulity and vanity, as freely and as deeply as her arts.

Early in May, Thyrlé left England. He went, as he had previously intended, to St. Petersburg first, and from thence to the interior of Russia, and the wildest parts of Siberia. He did not care through what peril or hardship he went, so long as he could keep at bay the memory which stung his pride to absolute madness.

Never once did it cross his open, truthful nature to suspect treachery in his own household. He would as soon have thought of tampering with letters himself as of accusing others of such a crime—even in his thoughts. It is oftenest that upright, honest dispositions possess a species of stupidity in such things which those of less honourable men are entirely free from. Hasson Grainger, if in Thyrlé's position, would probably have quickly hit upon something near the truth—would have questioned every being in the house, or posted his letters with his own hands. But Thyrlé could offer to himself but one solution to his mystery, humiliating though it was; and again and again he exclaimed, in his heart, "I hate her!" Yet, on the wild, snow-covered plains of Siberia, at the gaming table of Homburg, among noisy revels with riotous students at Baden or Munich, among the most perilous dangers of the Alps, and while idling stupidly by way of a change in Paris, still came far too often before his eyes the face which had so befuddled him—laughing, loving, angry, reproachful; as changeful as the real face. "Fickle," he said, bitterly, "as her nature." In spite of all this, he had—for he had promised her to do it—put the vignette of that strange face into another locket that hung beside the old one on his watch chain, but which was never opened.

It was near Christmas Day when he arrived, after his many wanderings, at Calais,

intending to reach London before Christmas, but with no definite end in view. He was a sadder man, perhaps, than when he left England, but in no way wiser or better.

ONCE A WEEK.

WHEN soft winds whisper, 'mid the leafy trees,
Of summer's coming, with its birds and
flow'rs,
And there is fragrance on the passing breeze,
And brightest sunshine stealing through green
bowers,
Who would not leave the noisome town, and seek
A quiet woodland stroll just once a week?

The shop is dingy, but the fields are green;
The ledgers thumbed and worn with flight of
years;
But flow'rs are fresh when fall the dews at e'en
On buds and blossoms glist'ning like joy-tears;
And fields and flow'rs are monitors that speak
To toil-worn hearts, good words, just once a week.

Though poor, the birds that warble in the shade
Have songs for you as for the titled lord;
And winds that dally with the tenderest blade
Will kiss your sunburnt brow with care-lines
scored,
And lure you from the cot or garret bleak
To wander where you will, just once a week.

O, brothers! pent up from the dawn of day
Till night's shades steal across the busy town,
When the week's toil is over, hie away
With wives and sweethearts, where the heather
brown
Woos the gay bee, that health may brown the cheek,
And beauty glad the heart, just once a week.

TABLE TALK.

A FRIEND is reckoning on a treat. It is about decided now that the Metropolitan Railway is to be continued from Liverpool-street, to which point it now reaches, round by Eastcheap, and from there to the Mansion House Station—thus completing the circle, oval, or whatever shape the figure may be. Our friend intends to have a day ticket, and go round and round the whole extent on the opening day. He always attacks novelties. He was the first man through the Tower subway; he made the first trip in the *Great Eastern*; he bought the first bottle of Robur, wore the first Ulster Noah's Ark coat, and rode the first bicycle. We have not space, or a volume might be filled with his feats.

"TO-DAY CONVICTS from Princetown Prison were at work in gangs among the surrounding hills cultivating land, when a

sudden fog came down from the tors, and the men were summoned to return. While being mustered, three, probably by preconcerted arrangement, made their escape, going in three different directions, hidden by the fog. Instantly the convicts were all hurried home, and secured. The alarm bells were rung, signal guns fired, and the whole force of warders, some mounted and others on foot, were hurried out in pursuit, telegrams being meantime sent by private wires to Plymouth, Tavistock, and Horrabridge; the escaped men had gained a good start, however, and the fog favoured them. After three or four hours one was sighted, and on refusing to halt was fired at, wounded, and dropped. Another was captured not long after among the tors, but had to be brought down by a rifle ball before he would surrender. The third was not come up with until late in the afternoon, having displayed great endurance and agility in getting away several miles over rocks and tors, eschewing, of course, the high road. He attempted to resist the warder who first approached him, and it was only when quite disabled and dangerously hurt by bullets that he was secured." The above appeared in the telegraphic news of a morning paper on June 3rd. One may reasonably ask, Is it an exaggeration, or were the creatures hunted wild beasts?

"IN A LADY'S toilette of to-day, the really vital points are the Corset and the Jupon. Our spring dresses will look dreadfully dowdy if we are not bien juponné. In Bustles, the great novelty of the season is perhaps the Corymbus, of plaited straw—no steel. Two other tournures of great merit are the Rouleau and the Grasshopper. In Corsets, Thomson's Glove-fitting seem to positively secure ladies against discomfort and inelegance; but it sometimes takes trouble to procure the genuine goods."

AT A PUBLIC missionary meeting held at Melbourne, on February 5, a clergyman, late of Fiji, spoke of the Pacific labour trade, and is reported to have concluded as follows:—"It was now said that annexation would wipe away all defects, but he did not believe it. What was wanted in Fiji was not red tape and a talking-shop, but a man—a man who would not hesitate to take any man by the neck and say, 'Do this or die.' He believed there was such a man in

Fiji, with a tight rein on the Government. There must be courage enough to hang a man when the proper occasion arose. It had been said, 'The worst use you can put a man to is to hang him.' He believed it was the very best use they could put some men to." Exactly! This shows how thoroughly one dwelling at Rome gets to do as the Romans do. Here is a man who has lived among the Fijians until he has imbibed anthropophagism, and declares that hanging is the very best use you can put some men to—of course, meaning the tough old blades that require hanging till they are tender enough to agree with the digestion. There is quite a gamey flavour about the speech.

PRIVATE STOKES, of the Never Dies, reads his paper regularly, and is the politician of his company. Giving his opinion the other evening upon Lord Sandhurst's speech in the House of Lords, he said, "Old Sandhurst" might go on talking for ever, but the real and proper way to recruit for the army was to give the men better beef, more of it, and a decent glass of beer, and not drive them to drink that druggist's shop mixture, the canteen swipes.

ONE MEETS OCCASIONALLY with strange advertisements—strange from the brevity enforced by the cost per word. Here is one:—

TO DRESSMAKERS.—WANTED immediately, experienced body and skirt.

An experienced body and skirt! It reads as if the skirt were to clothe the experienced body, and as if it (the advertisement) were made out by a North British brain, where one said, "Gin a body meet a body." Well, we hope the advertiser will get the body he wants—and skirt.

How is IT that novel-writing has not arrived at a higher pitch, when, according to the stereotyped phraseology of the critics, in so many cases the author is told that he has written a story "far above the average of modern novels"?

All Contributions are attentively considered, and unaccepted MSS. are returned on receipt of stamps for postage; but the Editor cannot hold himself responsible for any accidental loss. No unaccepted MSS. will be returned until a written application has been made for them.

ONCE A WEEK

NEW SERIES.

No. 338.

June 20, 1874.

Price 2d.

JACK'S SISTER; OR, WOMANLY PAST QUESTION.

CHAPTER XXXIII.
WHAT THE NEIGHBOURS SAID.



HERE did the ugly rumour first begin, and who gave it birth? It seemed as if

it had grown up by degrees, and waxed bigger and bigger, till at last all Marsh-ton Fallows went hugging up the fat morsel in quiet corners, and whispering one to another in quiet scorn—

"Bless you! I saw it from the first. Poor Jack Leyburn! Well, he will be well rid of the artful little hussey. Just to think of her in his good mother's place!"

"My dear, the notion was absurd; and I, for one, always said so. 'Mark my words, Caroline,' I said—and Caroline will remember me saying it—'mark my words,' said I, 'that will never come off.' And that was the first time of my seeing her along with him and his sister in the minster pew. A bonnet more like a top knot than anything, stuck on the back of her head, and all her hair frizzled out, like a wild Indian's, down her back."

"And did you see her heels, Mrs. Jones? Six inches high at the least. It's what I've never permitted my girls. Fashion, indeed! They may be the fashion among ballet dancers; but they're not respectable, and

they're not safe. Why, you might pitch on to your nose in a moment, and break your leg, perhaps."

"Humph! Miss Delamayne has managed to walk the wrong way quickly enough on hers."

"She? Oh, my dear, she would have walked there if she had had only one leg to go on. I'm afraid she comes of a dreadful lot. They say—Caroline, take your crochet into the school-room a little, my dear—they do say that her mother ran away with an earl's son, and he took poison within the week rather than go through a divorce case."

"Dear, dear, how shocking! Did you ever? And her husband took her back? It don't seem credible."

"Well, you see, Mrs. Smith, a clergyman; and a scandal would have been just his ruin. Oh! it was very wrong, of course. I'm afraid there are black sheep even among the ministry; for they do say the earl got him his present living to hush it up."

"Really!"

"And to think of young Leyburn marrying into such a family. I'm sure it would have broken his poor father's heart; and we ought to be thankful she has shown her true colours thus early; for I suppose it is broken off."

"Well, I fancy so; and yet—Ah, here's Mrs. Lovejoy, she can tell us perhaps. Is not Miss Delamayne still at the Cedars?"

"Miss Delamayne? Certainly. She and Miss Leyburn passed our house yesterday."

"How very strange! But he is away. Depend on it, he went to her father as soon as he found out what was going on. She will be sent for home."

"Then you think it is so, Mrs. Griffiths? And will she really marry young Mr. Gore?"

"Oh, no, not likely. Just imagine his parents consenting! He is a sad flirt, you know."

"Well, I tell you, Henry saw them alone in a boat on the river at nearly nine o'clock the other evening. They pulled in to the bank just under the bridge; and he helped her out, and stood holding her hand for nearly five minutes before he rowed away."

"What shocking impropriety! Well, I do wonder at Miss Leyburn permitting it. She so severe, too! I should have thought she would have locked the girl up rather than countenance such goings on."

"Oh, but Miss Leyburn is ill. Didn't you know? Confined to her bed for the last ten days. I called there last Monday, and Enid told me she had been sitting up at night with her aunt, she was so bad. Depend on it, Miss Leyburn knows nothing of this, Mrs. Jones."

"Does Enid, do you think?"

"Perhaps not; yet I think she must see. Young women are always quick-sighted with regard to other girls' flirtations. Besides, if Jack knows—"

"Well, I don't know. Enid is not much like other girls. A sweet, good girl, and very superior and all that; but so—so—I hardly know what it is, only she never seems to think about love and lovers. Anyhow, if she doesn't know, some one ought to tell her; for really it would be wrong to let her go on encouraging this girl from sheer ignorance."

"Very wrong. I quite agree with you. By the way, as you know them pretty well, you might make some remark about it."

"If? Oh! my dear, I'm not intimate enough for that. I should feel as if I were interfering; but *you*—your husband attending the family always—surely, you or he could speak about it. It would be only kind—"

"Perhaps; but my husband makes it a rule never to meddle in his patients' family affairs. That is just how Mr. Rose lost so much of his practice; and I am sure he would be very angry if I were to do so. No, it is a more a clergyman's part. Perhaps the archdeacon—"

"Oh, the archdeacon would never speak unless he were quite sure of his ground; and, after all, the engagement may not be broken off. I should not think they would keep her there if it were. It wouldn't be decent, you know."

"Then why is Jack Leyburn away?"

"Oh, the ostensible reason is bank busi-

ness. You know, Mrs. Gurney's boy is a junior clerk there; and she says that he says Jack was summoned to Jersey about the bank crisis there—some house which had dealings with his. Of course, I don't suppose it is that; but when one knows nothing—"

"One knows this, that Miss Delamayne, while nominally engaged to young Leyburn, is carrying on a most scandalous flirtation with the member's son; and I consider that some one ought to speak to the ladies at the Cedars about it; for it's the talk of the town, and I don't believe they know a word of it."

They did not. Of course not. Who ever does hear the tales about himself till they have grown stale in the mouths of every neighbour around him? Do we not sometimes see our dearest friends holding aloof from us for months, and never know the reason why? Have not even near relations taken, on various occasions, to presenting us with chilly digital extremities, and otherwise signifying that we are become as unsavoury fish in their nostrils, while we appear to ourselves redolent of the odour of sanctity, and cannot in the least understand the cause of our sudden relegation to the clans of the wicked? Everybody round knows the why and wherefore quite well—has known it all along, and supposes us to do the same. We don't, however. Ten to one we never find it out at all, or not for years after, and then the whole affair too frequently turns out to have been a mare's nest which a word would have cleared up then—which ten hundred could not destroy now.

After all, it does not much matter in the end. "Che sarà, sarà." There will be a clearing up of all mistakes one day which will leave small cause for complaint on either side. Mayhap some of the most injured among us now will want to cry out, "Let the cloud continue," in that hour when their own secret journals are overhauled equally with those of the enemy.

Small thought had Enid to the tide of gossip seething and gathering force with every additional rivulet around her. Aunt Jane was ill—laid in bed with a painful, irritating malady, which required all one person's care and attention to alleviate; and Enid gave it. If the good-hearted, acrimonious old woman had been her own mother, the girl could not have devoted herself with more loving goodwill to the sick-

room. Jack was away. Urgent business had really, as was reported, called him to Jersey; and he wrote from there saying he might be detained a fortnight—wrote regretting the dullness which his absence must entail on Baby Delamayne; and begging that Clifton Gore would as much as convenient take his place in affording some outdoor amusement to the betrothed guest at the Cedars.

Enid shrank when she heard this request first. Not from fear of the real consequences—that suspicion would, to a nature like hers, have been simply impossible; but from a nervous dread of possible pain and danger from an increased intimacy with her would-be lover. That one glimpse of the weakness hidden in herself had so shocked and frightened her that, but for habitual unselfishness, she would have run away and established herself somewhere where neither sight nor name of Clifton should disturb the serenity proper and becoming in "Cæsar's wife." To consider her own wishes was, however, as we have seen, practically out of the question with Enid Leyburn. Jack, Baby, Merle, and even Clifton himself, must all come first; and their several claims to consideration and forethought represented themselves too forcibly for Ego to get so much as a foothold. The poor girl dared not even indulge herself by being gentle and kind to the young Apollo so constantly brought before her, lest she should, even accidentally, add to the wrong he had already accused her of doing; and, besides, run the risk of inflicting a worse wrong on the man to whom she was engaged.

It was that engagement, indeed, which was the root of all this evil; but Enid neither blamed nor thought of it as such. Having decided for Merle because she considered it her duty, there was nothing for it but to fulfil that duty in the fullest sense, and take care that other people's feelings should be consulted as much, and wounded as little, as possible. Of her own she positively never thought; or if she did, it was simply to put them down as one with those of "her Merle." To do the thing that came next her to the best of her power, and make those about her comfortable and happy, was the range of this unsentimental young woman's ideas, both in the past and present; and as it was, the irritated, cloudy expression which seemed to have fallen like a black veil over Clif's fair face—the new, half

cynical, half mocking tone which pervaded his conversation, and now and then the wistful glances he would direct at herself—the sudden dropping into the old familiar tenderness of manner, emphasized by an unspoken sadness and despondency, shook her heart with such a yearning, nameless thrill to do something, she knew not what, that, in sheer self-defence, she hardened her face more coldly than before against these ebullitions, and more than ever avoided the young man's company.

When Jack went away, and it became evident that Miss Leyburn would be confined to her bed for some little time, Enid, though loving Baby with true sisterly warmth, and taking infinite delight and pleasure in her society, thought it only right to give her the option of leaving a sick house for the home where she had always so many more distractions and enjoyments than Marshton Fallows could, at best, afford. Baby, however, would not listen to the suggestion.

"What, leave *you*!" she said, twining one plump white arm around her friend's neck, and looking up into her face with childlike, limpid eyes. "Go away, just because Jack has gone; and leave you alone to wear yourself out in a sick room, without even any one to talk to when you do come downstairs. No, indeed!"

"Only it is so dull for you, pet," Enid said, stooping her head to kiss the fresh, pouting lips. "I have to be upstairs so much; and you know you never seem well when you have not your proper amount of exercise every day."

"I will take regular constitutionals by myself, then, and attend to your class at school; and Archie Hamiton and Mr. Gore must look in often to amuse us. And there is Mrs. Clifford always wanting me to come to her." (Mrs. Clifford was a young widow who had lately left St. Leonard's to settle in a cottage ornée on the banks of the Thames, and who numbered Clif as A. 1 on the list of her intimates.) "Oh, don't fear for me, Enid, dear, I shall do well enough, even if I were not perfectly happy with you alone (?). I only wish I could help in the nursing; but I'm such a stupid, nervous little thing in a sick room; and, besides, I don't think poor Miss Leyburn likes me. I don't know why, do you? and I'm so sorry; but I do not think she does, and—oh, please, don't laugh at me—but it makes me just a little bit afraid of her."

Enid kissed her again. She knew the accusation was true; and so, unable to refute it, took refuge in responding to Baby's lavish caresses. Somehow, I don't like to think of that divine simplicity of pure womanhood touching lips with this girl Iscariot of the nineteenth century; and yet is not the drama of the Betrayal carried out every day, even as it was in the Garden of Gethsemane long ago?—only it is the women now who contrive to take the leading part on most occasions. Judas was a poor, bungling traitor compared to many a fair-haired, sweet-faced girl, in frilled skirts and Dolly Varden hat. Sometimes I feel almost inclined to doubt whether there be any faith or honour between women at all. I pray there may be. Nay, for the credit of the sex, and from my own experience, I dare vouch there is on certain occasions; and with one condition always provided—that no man nor shadow of a man enter into the case. Granted this, and I could even believe in the possibility of such *rara avis* as an honest female friendship; but—flesh is weak. One ought not to try it beyond certain limits.

With Miss Leyburn ill, therefore, and Baby content and able to provide amusement for herself, Enid found the time pass quietly and monotonously enough; all the more so that she generally made the invalid an excuse for leaving the drawing-room during Clifton's visits, and so escaping the danger she had dreaded.

"You will amuse our guest, Baby," she would say, after a minute or two—"I think poor auntie may miss me;" and so would rise and slip quietly away, sternly refusing to see the not unfrequent appeal in Clifton's eyes, or listen to the half suppressed earnestness of his persuasions that she would remain.

Poor fellow! It was not passion for herself now that urged them; but just an honest attempt at fighting the devil incarnate in his own human weakness, where a woman, and a woman most fair and young to see, was doing her utmost to drag him blindfold into an abyss deeper than any hell to an honourable man. And, unfortunately, he saw his weakness, not the woman's snares; and felt the effect of her witchery, without recognizing the nature of the spells which seemed daily entangling him in a mesh from which there was no escape—a mesh so impalpable that it looked like the veriest haze

of summer's sunshine, save on rare occasions, when the glowing dazzle seemed to part asunder for one moment, and show him a fleeting glimpse of the pit beyond.

Pleasant, too pleasant, as was this dallying with danger, he would have broken loose from it if Enid had helped him; but she turned her back, and went on her way, heartless and indifferent, to all seeming. Jack himself said "Stay," and then departed, leaving the field clear. Certainly, Jack didn't say, "Flirt with Baby while I'm away." But he knew how difficult it was for his friend not to flirt when so tempted, more especially when the woman he wanted to marry had just rebuffed and humiliated him, and the woman he couldn't marry was surrounding him with the sweetest and most flattering worship. It was very wrong, of course; but somehow the wrongness seemed to give it an additional piquancy; and then, it was only for a few days. Jack would be back in no time, and then he (Clif) would go—be off to the Continent, or anywhere. In the meantime, "*vogue la galère*." If Baby liked him, it was not his fault. If never a day passed without meeting her at the Cedars, or Mrs. Clifford's, or in some of her numerous rambles, it was not of his seeking. Had his friends been more considerate of his feelings, he need never have been thrown in her way. And she was so pretty—such a bright, little will-o'-the-wisp piece of colour and nonsense, a man must be more than man to snub her sweet caprices, or shut his ears to her sweeter beguiling.

"I feel quite gay this morning, with Aunt Jane so much better, and Jack coming home the day after to-morrow," Enid said, coming into Baby's room one morning to perform an office she loved—*i.e.*, brushing out the long, crisp waves of golden hair; while the little sinner who owned them leant back, dressing-gowned and slippers, in a low chair before the mirror. "You won't be left to yourself much longer, pet. Indeed, I almost think she could spare me to take a good walk with you this morning."

Something very like dismay was reflected for one moment in the cheval glass; but Baby put up a hasty hand to sweep the overplus of curls off her brow, and answered, readily—

"Oh, how charming, dear Enid; we can walk right away to— But, ah, I forgot. What a pity!"

"What?" Enid asked, smoothing down

the shining cascade with lingering, tender hands.

"I promised to lunch with Mrs. Clifford. She was to show me how to do that lace pattern for your apron. But you can come, too. Do, Enid."

"To lunch? Oh, no, it would take too long; and just at the hour for auntie's dinner, when, she won't eat anything unless I am with her. No, I must let you go alone." But Enid looked a little disappointed. "You must take the pony chaise."

"Mrs. Clifford promised to call for me in hers."

"Then I will send it to bring you back."

"No—no, you might like a little drive; and I should prefer the walk much. I must have my constitutional, you know."

"Wilful childie," said Enid, laughing.

"At least, ask Mrs. Clifford to send a servant with you, or you will lose yourself, as you did the other evening. You can't think how anxious I was when nine struck, and you had not come in."

Baby laughed too.

"Very well, I will make her send some one; and I won't stop late. I do so wish you were coming too."

And, the hair being combed and brushed to the satisfaction of both, she sprang up, and began to arrange it in her own pet fantastic fashion.

Mrs. Clifford called in due time, and Baby departed with her. Enid, languid from over-confinement to the house, and wanting the stimulus of a companion, stayed at home till pretty late in the afternoon; when it occurred to her that Mrs. Hamilton, the arch-deacon's wife, had been very assiduous in making inquiries after Miss Leyburn, and that it would be only courteous to return them by a call of thanks.

Unfortunately, the lady was "at home." *Unfortunately*, for she was already entertaining a select group of two or three female friends; and I can only attribute it to the absorbing interest of their conversation that the footman's announcement passed unheeded, and Enid, coming into the room, heard these words, delivered with great distinctness and energy by Mrs. Griffiths, the good lady of the pickled-cabbage face aforementioned—

"I tell you it's quite scandalous. As I drove over here just now, I saw him and her dawdling along a lane, with their heads close together, like a pair of engaged lovers;

and, whether the Leyburns know it or not, I do say it ought not to go on. Mr. Gore may have taken up the girl now, and mean to marry her; but Jack Leyburn introduced her to me as his future wife, and—"

She stopped short; for Mrs. Hamilton had seen her new guest, and risen with a hurried gesture, amid a general hush of consternation, so great that Enid's face, which had been as white as paper, turned redder than those she interrupted. Yet it was she who spoke first, with her own simple directness, and turning to her hostess as the responsible person—

"You were speaking of us—my brother and my new sister. I am afraid I have interrupted you."

"My dear," said Mrs. Hamilton, a kindly, white-haired old lady, "I am very sorry you should have heard anything to pain you; but perhaps it is for the best. I did not want to interfere, but some of us have been thinking you ought to have been spoken to before."

Enid opened her eyes. There was a gathering horror in them; but she still stood facing the group, her attitude full of youthful dignity.

"Spoken to! About what?" she said. "I beg your pardon, but I do not understand how there can be anything concerning my brother which you can have to speak about to me."

"Take her into your room, Mrs. Hamilton," said Mrs. Griffiths, with rough good nature. "I'm very sorry for you, Enid; for I like you, and I liked your mother; but this sort of thing isn't decent; and if you don't know, it's only right you should."

"Know what?" inquired Enid, calmly; though the pale horror deepened, and she felt as if she were about to faint. "No, thank you, Mrs. Hamilton, I would rather stay here, if you please. What is it that I ought to know and do not?"

"Perhaps you do, my dear," said Mrs. Hamilton, soothingly. "Perhaps the engagement has been broken off amicably. I know young Gore and Jack were always wonderful friends; but—but perhaps it would have been better to signify it to the people you introduced her to."

"It makes a scandal in the town," put in Mrs. Griffiths, abruptly, her pickled-cabbage countenance more rubicund than usual. "And even if she changed her mind, and Jack changed his, it isn't fit

or proper the new affair should be carried on from your house. I blame your aunt. You and Jack may have romantic scruples; but she ought to know better."

"About what?" Enid asked again, driven almost to desperation. "My aunt is ill, and neither she nor I know anything of what you allude to. Mr. Gore is Jack's friend, as you say, and Miss Delamayne is my future sister. What do you want to tell me more—of them?"

"Oh, my dear Enid, I am so sorry," said Mrs. Hamilton, awed by the rebuking majesty of the young queen; and beginning to cry as she laid her wrinkled hand on the girl's interlaced fingers. "But it is quite true. Miss Delamayne is keeping up a most improper flirtation with Clifton Gore behind your back, and every one is talking of it, and we don't think it ought to be; and—and don't be angry, my dear, you ought to have been told before."

But Enid did not hear. It seemed as if a grave had opened before her; and a sound as of mighty waters was surging and echoing in her ears.

BULLIONDUST'S SECRETARY.

CHAPTER III.

DELMINGTON père rejoiced in ancestors, and advertised them accordingly—hung them out to his guests, as mine host of the Green Dragon displays the Marquis of Carabas, or any other distinguished personage; with the difference that Boniface displays his pro bono publico, whilst the lord of Healdon Hall only permits his forefathers to be gazed upon by those whom he admits within the Arctic circle of his acquaintance. And he is a frozen-up, aristocratic old buffer, who wears an Anglesea hat, and a Brummel stock, a pea-green Hayne collar, and straps to his trousers, and "a fob, sir, with my grandfather's seals, sir, presented to him, sir, by George the Third, sir, over a leg of mutton and an apple dumpling, sir."

The room was full of smoke, and two young men were playing billiards in their shirt sleeves.

These young gentlemen bore traces of dissipation beneath their eyes, and drawled in their conversation, as if the exertion of speaking was a little too much for them. Their voices came from the pit of the stomach; and an acute observer could detect

a sentence—or, indeed, a word—in the process of formation, until, like an air bubble in a ginger beer bottle, it reached the surface.

"I cawn't play Jephson," drawled player number one, leaning against the chimney-piece for support; "he's miles too good for me."

"It's no discredit to be beaten by Jephson," exclaimed Beauvoir Delmington—"a man who could give Major Colthurst twenty-five points is invincible."

"I can play any gentleman player in England, I don't care who he is," returned Mr. Jephson, with great complacency, carefully wiping an eyeglass, preparatory to sticking it into his eye for the purpose of having a good stare at the new-comer.

"Can you give Major Colthurst twenty-five points?" asked Sydney Ruthven, quietly.

Mr. Jephson let his glass drop, with a click against one of his waistcoat buttons, opened his mouth as if to yawn, thought better of it, and said—

"Ya-as."

"I didn't think there was a man in England could do it, except—" here he stopped short—"one."

"I'm that one, then," yawned Mr. Jephson, moving towards an open window, with a contemptuous nod, and in a tone as though he were addressing either a lacquey or a child.

Sydney Ruthven's lip curled up, and a knot or two of veins might be seen forming themselves about the corners of his forehead, evidently for the purpose of holding confabulation as to the asinine qualities of the person to whom they were bound for better or for worse.

"I'll play you even," said Mr. Bulliondust's secretary, in a short, dry tone, as though a husky cough from behind the words was kicking them from his lips.

Mr. Jephson wiped his eyeglass, screwed it into the corner of his right eye, wiped it again, screwed it into the corner of his left eye, drawing his mouth all on one side, and his face into puckers, let it drop upon the favourite button with a clink, and exclaimed, in accents almost bordering upon astonishment—

"You!"

"Yes," was the quiet response.

"Haw, haw!" laughed Mr. Jephson, leaning out of the window—out into the glorious summer night. "I do declare, Miss Delming-

ton, there's a person here who wants to play me even at billiards."

"And I hope he'll beat you," cried a silvery voice from the garden—as silvery as the moonbeams, as silvery as the few coins reposing in the trousers pocket of the audacious scrivener.

"Do come in, Mabel," exclaimed Mr. Beauvoir Delmington, from the window. "You'll be sure to catch cold. There's a heavy dew falling."

"Come in, and see me beaten at evens," laughed the individual who had played and vanquished the formidable Major Colthurst.

A glass door opened, and a young girl entered—the young girl who screamed upon first sight of Sydney Ruthven; the young girl who leaned upon his arm, whose perfumed breath had embalmed his hay-coloured beard, whose presence had sent sunlight into his heart, right through his shabby waistcoat; the young girl who had frozen every feeling but that of Hope with a few glacial words.

She was a fair picture to gaze upon, in her soft white robes, with her soft grey eyes, and her soft round cheeks, and her soft red lips, and her soft brown tresses, and her soft white bosom, pure and white as the petal of the lily of the valley.

She threw one hasty glance at Mr. Bulliondust's creature, acknowledged his presence by just one look right into his eyes—which he drank, poor fellow, as thirstily as though he were perishing from fever—and asked Mr. Jephson with whom he was going to play at evens.

"This—this—g-gentleman."

And he nearly choked upon the word.

"He must be drunk," muttered Mr. Bulliondust; "the fellow doesn't know a cue from a six-inch rule; and it's infernally cheeky of him."

There was a something in Ruthven's tone that led his host to imagine that he had not spoken lightly; and advancing with more of courtesy than he had hitherto exhibited, he asked him to select a cue from the rack, volunteering to lend him his own.

"I'm not particular, so as it is straight," laughed Ruthven, selecting, however, a particularly "handy tool," and chalking it with extreme deliberation.

"Sixty-three, Mr.—?"

"Sixty-three."

"Shall we toss, or string?"

"Whichever you please."

They strung accordingly, and Mr. Jephson lost.

"Have I the lady's permission to take off my coat?" asked Ruthven, bowing in the direction of Miss Delmington, but without looking at her.

"Oh, certainly," exclaimed her brother. "By the way, Mabel, this is Mr. Ruthven, a friend of Mr. Bulliondust."

"My secretary," interposed that excellent person, with a hiccough.

Was there no friendly hand near thee, oh, Sydney Ruthven!—*alias*—to pluck thee by thy threadbare sleeve and whisper, "Remove that garment at thy peril"? Dost thou not know that the elbows of thy flannel shirt have been frayed away with constant friction with thy apology for a coat, and that thy naked flesh peers through, desirous of obtaining a glimpse of the outer world, and of being placed in a position of equality with the other portions of thy body, which bask in the rays of the noonday light?

Out upon thee and thy mad craze to vanquish this vaunting knight of the cue!

"Shall we play for anything?" asked Mr. Jephson, superciliously lighting a fresh cigar.

"I have no money," said Sydney Ruthven, giving the stereotyped miss in baulk.

This movement was clumsily executed; and his opponent bestowed a confidential glance upon the company generally, to inform them that he was about to amuse himself at the expense of the pauper braggart.

Mr. Jephson played so well that he scored thirty-three before Sydney Ruthven got a chance.

And then—

Why, Mr. Jephson happened to leave the balls in such a position as to enable his unknown antagonist to make the game in a single hand. It may have been a fluke, but he did it, nevertheless.

"I'm out of practice," observed the winner, apologetically, as he thrust his person into his threadbare coat; "and I have the honour of wishing you good night."

And with a bow such as Charles Edward might have bestowed upon Edward Waverley, of Waverley House, in that long, dreary-looking apartment at Holyrood, Mr. Sydney Ruthven quitted the room.

"A fluke," observed Mr. Jephson, forgetting the presence of the lady.

"The best play I ever witnessed," exclaimed Miss Delmington, warmly.

"I never saw the game won in a single hand before," observed her brother; "and it certainly was beautifully played."

"I never knew that my secretary was a dab at (hic) billiards," grunted the contractor; adding, sotto voce—"I s'pose he was a marker afore I picked him up."

Meanwhile, the subject of these commentaries proceeded to his bed-room, but not to sleep. He threw off his coat and waistcoat, and plunging his hands deeply into the waistband of his trousers, paced up and down the apartment in silent meditation.

"Shall I do it?" he muttered, after taking about an hour's exercise like a bear in a cage. "It's weak—very weak; but it would be such a glory to stamp out her pitiful pride. No, I will not."

And he turned to the window, opened it, and leant out into the balmy summer night.

The soft, velvety air cooled his feverish temples, and sent its soothing influence down the shaft of his brain to his surging heart. Love at first sight! Pshaw! fudge! bosh! Penny-a-lining, and then the worst style of fiction. And yet that strange, lustreous look, that one short gaze—

A knock at the door interrupted his reverie.

"Come in."

"Please to leave out yer boots, and I'm to ask if you'll 'ave a tub."

Leave out his boots? Oh, agony! Such boots!—tinkered by himself, cobbled till the son of Crispin denounced them as a mockery, a delusion, and a snare. Boots gone at the soles, gone at the uppers. Heels all down on one side; toes painfully suggestive of a black plaster cast. Boots which had been polished until they rebelled, and refused to take any more polish at any price whatsoever. And here was a liveried menial, faultlessly attired, waiting in an attitude of expectation—for what? These identical, farcical leathern effigies.

"At what hour does your post leave for London?" he asked.

"The letter-bag is a-goin' in ten minutes, to ketch the night mail hup. Master's a gettin' things from town."

"Please let me have a sheet of paper and an envelope."

"You'll find 'em there, sir," said the servant, pointing to a drawer attached to a small table.

"Thanks. Come back in five minutes."

The man returned within the time speci-

fied. He did not like to be ordered about by a "fellow" like Ruthven, but somehow there was that in the tone which forbade disrespect to the individual or disregard of the individual's directions.

"Assuming this to be posted to-night, it will be delivered in London by the first delivery, and a parcel could reach me here by five or six o'clock to-morrow?"

"Yes, sir, it could; there's height trains a day to Sunnyside Station from Euston."

"All right, never mind the boots. I shall take a tub."

And the secretary dismissed the lacquey. The latter, from idle curiosity, read the address upon the letter—

"Captain Fitzalmaine, Guards Club, London, W."

"A beggin' letter," muttered Jeames, as he dropped it into the bag.

Mr. Bulliondust honoured the secretary by a visit about eleven o'clock upon the following morning.

"The family don't object to your mealing with them. In fact, they expected you, and Miss Delmington asked after you; but I said your clothes wasn't good enough. I thought it better to put it straight at once, so as to make you easy."

A flush across his face, and a nervous twitch of the hands. The eminent contractor was making a mess of it.

"I sha'n't want you to-day, as I'm going with Bowvoy over to my place, in the tax-cart. You can amuse yourself any way you can. Go into the grounds and gardens, but don't mind the drawing-room. If you like to make money off them chaps at billiards, do—they can afford it."

"I sha'n't go out to-day, and I don't want to make any money except what I earn. As for my visiting the drawing-room, it is not likely."

Captain Fitzalmaine, Guards Club, London, W., was enjoying some very thin bacon and some very thick toast when our hero's letter was handed to him.

"God bless my soul!" exclaimed the gallant warrior, spluttering.

The note ran this wise:—

"Healdon Hall, Friday night.

"DEAR GEORGE—Send me down, *at once*, a couple of suits of your clothes. They fit me exactly. I only want a loan of them. Entire suits, from shirt collar to

boots. You don't want them, nor do I, for the matter of that; but I have reasons for wishing to have them, which I shall explain if we ever meet. Pay all expenses, as I have no money.—Yours,

“PERCY STONLEIGH.

“P.S.—Address Sydney Ruthven, as this is the flag under which I sail for the present.”

Captain Fitzalmaine came up to time smiling. Tupps, his Corporal Trim, proceeded to Euston-square Station within an hour from the receipt of the letter, in charge of a box addressed “Sydney Ruthven, Esquire, Healdon Hall, Sunnyside Station. To be forwarded. Carriage and carrier paid.” And having formally handed over the same, and obtained the necessary vouchers from clock-like and machine-made clerks, Tupps cautiously repaired to the nearest bar, and indulged in a “pint o' bitter.”

The day had far advanced, and Sydney Ruthven—for until the right moment we shall call him by that name and none other—who had been immured in a close, fusty little room, in the dingiest portion of the Hall, became mentally and physically red-hot. He could not bear the confinement a moment longer; it became insufferable, and he resolved upon making an excursion as far as the library, the locality of which had been pointed out to him on the preceding evening by his employer.

Mr. Jephson, Captain Delmege, and two other gentlemen were in the library when Sydney Ruthven entered. He would willingly have drawn back, in order to avoid these beings, with whom he had no sympathies in common; but Mr. Jephson had perceived him, and patronizingly invited him to enter.

Ruthven quietly lounged to the nearest book-shelf, and took down one of Jules Sandeau's charming novels—“Madeleine”; and sinking into an easy chair, which fitted itself to any movement of his body like a blanket, was soon immersed in the witcheries of this most beautiful conception of the gifted French author, and for which, by the way, he was couronné by the Academy.

The occupants of the apartment, whose conversation had been interrupted by his entrance, after a whispered communication from Mr. Jephson, resumed the thread of their discourse. They had been speaking of

the recent Crimean war; and Captain Delmege was laying down the law, using such technicalities and Queen's regulation phrases as military men are wont to do whose audiences are exclusively composed of civilians. Alma, and Lord Raglan's fatal error in not pushing on at once to Sebastopol, were soon disposed of. Then came the charge of the Light Brigade. Captain Delmege—who, by the by, belonged to a line regiment, and only arrived in the Crimea to find Sebastopol in ruins—came out uncommonly strong; recounted a series of messages that poor Captain Nolan never could by the remotest possibility have received; laid the severest censure upon Lord Cardigan; and concluded a very lengthened dissertation by solemnly declaring that the said Lord Cardigan never rode in the direction of the enemy at all.

“He gave the order, rode about two hundred yards, dropped behind, and then—ha! ha! ha! Twiggez vous, gentlemen?”

Here Captain Delmege bestowed a glance full of mysterious import upon his auditors.

“You are utterly mistaken, sir,” suddenly exclaimed Sydney Ruthven, wheeling round his easy chair, and sternly confronting the group; “and before you recklessly fling away the name and fame of any soldier, be he general or private, you should at least have the warranty of facts.”

Jephson's eyeglass fell helplessly upon his bosom; Captain Delmege glared like an animal from which a bone has been suddenly and violently abstracted. Tugging fiercely at the ends of his moustache, he blurted—

“And what the deuce may you know about it, sir?”

“I do happen to know something about it, and let this be a lesson to you in future”—Sydney Ruthven paused ere he sent the last thrust safely home—“I rode in that charge, and I saw Lord Cardigan beyond the Russian battery.”

And Sydney Ruthven quietly turned his back upon them, and resumed his perusal of “Madeleine.”

The gallant captain grew very red, fidgeted a good deal, tugged viciously at his moustache, shifted uneasily upon his chair, and could only find vent for his irritated and injured feelings in the exclamation, “By Jove!”

Mr. Jephson noiselessly glided towards a shelf, whereon reposed a series of Army Lists, and taking down one for October, 1864,

asked, in a sneering tone, to what regiment Mr. Ruthven belonged?

"The 11th Hussars," was the reply, without taking his eyes from off his book.

Rapidly but furtively the other ran up and down, and down and up, the names in the List, and in a whisper asked the discomfited warrior to check him.

"I do not find your name here, Mr. —," observed Captain Delmege.

"Where?" asked Ruthven.

"In the Army List of October, '64."

"You are looking in the list of officers?"

"Certainly."

"You may save yourself the trouble. I was a full private."

"By Jove!" exclaimed Captain Delmege.

And the entire party, at a sign from Mr. Jephson, quitted the apartment.

"Thank heaven! I can have a read without likelihood of interruption from that lot," muttered Sydney Ruthven, plunging himself deeper into the easy chair.

How strangely things come about!

Mabel Delmington happens to have nothing particular to do; the day is very warm, and the coolest apartment in the house is the library. Yes, she will go to the library and have a read. What shall she read? It is a long time since she read a French novel. Sandeau's are all permitted. Yes, she will read one of Sandeau's. Which of them? "Sacs et Parchemin"? No; she remembers everyline of it. "Madeleine"? Oh, yes! Dear, sweet, tender, true Madeleine—the primrose of purity, the lily of goodness! And she enters the library. Ruthven is so deeply buried in the chair, and in the book, that she does not perceive him. So noiseless are her movements, that she is actually upon the ladder in search of the volume, displaying—and this is mentioned in the strictest confidence, and is not to go further—a tiny little foot, encased in a black satin boot, with a coquettish-looking black satin bow standing sentry over her dainty little toes, and an ankle, ere he became aware of her presence.

He did not feel her presence, as is the fashion with lackadaisical young gentlemen upon the stage.

"Can I assist you?" he asks, springing to his feet.

She starts violently, and tumbles off the ladder—ungracefully, maybe. It must needs be admitted one cannot always pose for one's photo.

He catches her willingly; and, to tell the truth, holds her in his possession longer than is absolutely necessary.

"Thanks," she palpitated. "I was looking for a book I came here to read. I—I did not know that anybody was here."

"There is nobody here. I am nobody," he says, smiling grimly enough.

"I was looking for one of my favourite books," she says, without noticing his attempt at a "goak"—"Madeleine," by Jules Sandeau."

"And here it is, Miss Delmington," handing it with a bow.

"You—you were reading it!"

She is still in a flutter, and does not look at him.

"I was only just glancing through it. It is an old favourite."

"Pray do not let me deprive you of it, Mr. Ruthven."

Ruthven does not look at her, but says he has letters to write, and shuffles from the apartment in a mean and paltry endeavour to conceal his broken boots.

Miss Delmington drops into the chair which the shabby secretary had just vacated, and instead of plunging into M. Sandeau's romance, although it lies open upon her lap, gazes straight out before her; then closes her eyes, then smiles, then sighs, then petulantly flings the book aside, then rings the bell, then calls for her hat and parasol, then picks up the volume again, and then marches out through the window, across the lawn, and down to the riverside.

When Sydney Ruthven regained his dingy apartment, he found it blockaded by a huge box. Fitzalmaine had been true; so had Tupps; so had the railway officials; so had the carriers. There is a heap of good in this world, if one could only discover it.

"Shall I?" asked Ruthven of himself.

He opens the box. The contents are too much for him. He casts aside his beggarly attire, and arrays himself in the borrowed plumage. Now, it might prove interesting to bank clerks, mercantile assistants—by the way, bank clerks are bankers now, shops are establishments, customers are clients: nous avons changé tout cela—to know how a Guardsman dresses when not in vermillion; and this is exactly how it's done.

Let us begin at the beginning. Grey silk stockings, with white clocks; patent leather shoes, of the Burlington Arcade cut, varnished with three coats of patent

varnish; mouse-coloured trousers, as loose as those of the Ancient Mariner himself, coarse, but beautiful in their coarseness, as is the hair of the Skye terrier; short jacky coat, and waistcoat of same material, but of a lighter colour than the continuations; a black tie, in a sailor's knot; and a blue and white shirt, stripes broad, the bosom without a plait, and as hard and as even as a billiard table.

Sydney Ruthven, in this attire, looked all that any young woman's fancy might have painted him.

The rogue smiled at himself in the glass, and twirled his hay-coloured beard and moustache in a deliberate and exceedingly self-satisfied manner.

At this crisis, he perceives Miss Delmington crossing the lawn. His heart flies up to the roof of his skull, and then drops to the soles of his varnished shoes.

"She's going towards the ruin. I'll take a short cut and meet her. How free from ice was her manner to-day, and her eyes—"

If there were no eyes there would be no lovers. Nobody ever heard of two blind people falling in love with one another. It's the dilation of the iris that does it. Let oculists look to this.

Mabel Delmington is again destined to be startled. She is seated beneath the shade of a glorious old beech. The bright green leaves are over her pretty head, the ruin is dreaming in the drowsy hum of the summer's day at her pretty feet, and she is building a castle in the air; and somehow or other a person strangely resembling the seedy visitor at the Hall is to be found at every turn in her aerial edifice.

The dead leaves crackle beneath the tread, not of an armed heel, but of a varnished shoe. And, lo! the Marquis of Carabas, alias Sydney Ruthven, stands before her, in the fashionable and becoming attire with which his gallant friend has so generously provided him.

ANGUISH IN PRINT.

IN THE STRICTEST CONFIDENCE.

TEAR THE TWENTIETH.

BREAD AND BUTTER.

THERE, I meant in that last chapter to have told a great deal more; but so many of my troubles and misadventures kept creeping in, that I did not get in one

half of what I intended. What pains I took to gain an interview—or, rather, to grant the poor fellow an interview, though it would have been to me the reaching of a green oasis in my journey across life's desert, when, for a short time, the gentle palm branches would have waved, as it were, in gentle motion above our heads, while our cheeks would have been fanned by the gentle breath of love.

Of course there was a terrible to do about the basin in the morning, while it so happened, luckily, that the cat was not beneath our window, but beyond the Fraulein's; so that in trying to reach it, Clara had thrown the basin for some distance, and right past our neighbour's window. The Fraulein declared that she had never opened her window; and, poor woman, she opened her mouth into quite a round O when told that she must have thrown it out. There was nothing to throw the suspicion upon us, for it was more likely to have been Celia Blang, on the other side of the Fraulein; and so, at last, the matter dropped, and we heard no more of it then.

But I had such a delightful treat two days after; for while we were going down the High-street, Miss Furness must turn faint, and have to be helped into the first house at hand, to sit down and rest, and that was Mrs. Jackney's, the milliner's; and there we were, four or five of us at once, in the little parlour—dear Achilles's "apartment meublée," as he called it. He was from home, giving lessons somewhere, no doubt; but while they were bathing Miss Furness's face, and giving her sniffs of salts, and glasses of water to drink, I had such a look round the place, and saw his dear old boots in one corner—the pair, I was sure, he must put on for ease and comfort of a night; and I was so glad to see them, for if, instead, I had caught sight of a nice, handsomely worked pair of slippers, they would have given me quite a pang; while now I felt that the task—no, the pleasure—was left for me.

Then there was a dear, duck of an old coat hanging behind the door; and such dear, funny little holes in the elbows, where he had rested his arms upon the table while he studied; and there was his pipe, and two bits of cigars, and a few paper covered books, and one thing which did, I must own, make me feel a little uncomfortable, a scarlet and black smoking cap—at

least, it had been scarlet once, and had evidently been made by a lady, and, of course, one would have liked to have known who was the maker. At first, in remembrance of her bitter, teasing words, I thought that it might have been Clara; but it did not look new enough; for the scarlet was fast verging upon the black, and, no doubt, in a short time it would have been impossible to make out the pattern. But I was glad to see it; for it was a hint that Achille would soon require a new one, and I knew who would make it. However, I did not much care; and, taking advantage of there being no one looking, I contrived to drop my handkerchief inside it; but directly after I trembled, and wanted to have it back again; for there was my name marked upon it in full, in ink, and I was afraid that his landlady, Mrs. Jackney, might see it.

But I had a good look at her, to see whether I need feel jealous, and found, to my great delight, that I need not; for she was worse in appearance than Miss Furness, but evidently a very pleasant body; though, all the same, I should not have liked her to find my handkerchief. However, there was no getting it back; for Miss Furness was now able to sit up, and I was one of the first to be obliged to leave the room, and stand agonized in the passage, lest any one should find out what I had done. But nothing was seen, and I heard afterwards from Achille, in one of his notes—the best, I think, that he ever wrote to me—how fondly he prized the treasure; and I mentally declared that it was not a bad way of laying out the value of a pocket-handkerchief, and that he should soon have another.

It was so horribly unfortunate; but, so sure as we made an engagement to meet, something was sure to happen; while, in spite of the time that had now passed since the poor Signor left, not one short five minutes had poor Achille and I had together. It was enough to make me ever so fond and devoted; and though I might be trembling a little in my allegiance at one time, I was ready to become a martyr now for his sake. But, as I said before, the very fact of an assignation being made was the signal for, or precursor of, something about to happen; so that, I'm sure, I was quite in a tremble, a few days after Miss Furness's faint, when Achille gave me a few lines inside De Porquet, telling me, in a few simple words, that he was again that

night about to try his fortune, when he hoped I should be able to assist him to benefit the poor exiles, who were now in a great state of distress. No one, to have found that scrap of paper, would have imagined that it was anything more than a piece torn off to act as book-mark, and he passed me the book with it standing right out, so that Miss Furness could see it quite plainly; and then, too, he passed it right under her nose, saying—

"I have put a piece of paper where you shall go on, Miss Bozerne."

When I looked at it there was only hastily scrawled—

"Mercredi, une heure," and "the poor suffer want—les pauvres ont besoin."

That was all, and it really seemed to be a bit of exercise, and nothing else. But then, I had the key in my heart, and could read it as he meant; though truly it was an exercise for me to find means to overtop all difficulties and meet him. I knew what he meant well enough—just as well as if he had written four pages, crossed, in his own nig-gling, little, scrippily, unintelligible, Frenchy hand. So I sat thinking of the six box cords tied together and hidden away in the bottom drawer, underneath my green silk, and tightly locked up to keep them from prying eyes.

Well, of course, I told Clara—though I may as well own that I really should not if I could have helped it. For she was anything but what I should have liked; and, of course, I did not like to be so teased. And there was my appetite so spoiled again that I could not eat, and poor me in such a fidget for the rest of the day, that I did not know what to do. I slipped upstairs three times to see if the cord was all right, and the knots tightly tied; and then, the last time, if I did not hear Miss Furness calling me, and come down in a flurry and leave the key in the drawer. I turned quite hot all over when I felt for it in my pocket, and was sure I had lost it somewhere; when if I could not get some more cord I should be stopped again; when all at once I remembered that the thing must be stuck in the keyhole. So, as soon as the lesson with Miss Furness was over, I slipped to the back staircase, and was about half-way up, when I must meet that tiresome, fat, old Fraulein.

"Vots for you heere, Mees Bozerne?" croaked the tiresome old English killer.



"Young ladies 'ave no beesness upstaer in de afternoon. Go you down."

Of course I had to go down again, for I was breaking rules, and ought to have been at work at private study in the school-room till half an hour before tea-time.

"It's too bad," I muttered, as I began to descend—"too bad to send me to a place like this, where one may not even go up to one's bed-room. I'm sure, I don't feel in the least bit like a school-girl."

Just then I heard Miss Sloman calling the Fraulein to "Come here, dear!" They always called one another, "my love," and "dear," in private, though I'm sure no one could have been more unamiable, or looked more ready to scratch and call names. So the Fraulein again ordered me to go down, and then turned back, evidently to go to Miss Sloman; so, seizing the opportunity, I slipped down into the hall, and began bounding up the front stairs like lightning, when if I did not literally run up against Mrs. Blunt, and strike her right in the chest with my head, just as she had come out of her room—for I was not looking, but, with head down, bounding up two stairs at a time.

It was a crash! Poor woman, she could not get breath to speak for some time. But, there, she was not the only one hurt; for that horrible twisted vulcanite coronet was driven right into my poor head, and hurt me terribly.

"Ach ten!" cried the Fraulein, who had heard the crash and exclamation on both sides, and now came waddling up; "I told you go down, ten, Miss Bozerne, and you come up to knock de lady principal."

And there I was, without a word to say in defence, sent down in the most dreadful disgrace. But there was some fun in it, after all; for Clara vowed that the poor woman received such a shock that two of her bones—stay bones—were broken, and she nearly swallowed her teeth. But that Clara always would exaggerate so dreadfully; and, of course, that was not true.

I was not going to be threatened with medicine this time because my appetite was bad, so I kept one slice of bread and butter upon my plate to bite at, though it was almost enough to choke me; and then I managed to draw two more slices over the edge of my plate into my lap, where my pocket-handkerchief was spread all ready; and then I wrapped them up, when I thought that no one was looking, and put them

in my pocket; and so tea was got over, and I thought what a long time it would be till midnight.

We were all standing in the middle of the class-room before getting our books out for the evening studies, when if Patty Smith did not come up to me, and, without waiting to see whether I would or not, exclaimed—

"Lend me your handkerchief, Laura, dear—I won't keep it a moment!"

And then seizing one end, which stuck out of my pocket, she gave it a snatch, when out it flew, and one piece of bread and butter was slung across the room, and struck Miss Furness in the face; while the other went flop up against the window behind her, stuck upon the pane for a moment, and then fell—leaving a buttery mark where it had stuck, as a matter of course. I declare I never felt so much ashamed in my life; while there were all the girls tittering and giggling, and Miss Furness wiping her face and scolding terribly about my dreadfully unladylike behaviour, though nothing could have been more humiliating than what followed, for I'm sure I wished there was not such a thing as a piece of bread and butter upon the face of the earth; for said Miss Furness—

"And now, Miss Bozerne, come and pick up those pieces."

I would have given anything to have been able to refuse; but what could I do? I do not see how I could have helped it, for I really felt obliged; and there I was kneeling down, humbled and penitent, to pick it up; and there were the tiresome, buttery pieces, all broken up into crumbs here and crumbs there, all over the place.

"For your sake, Achille!" I murmured to myself; and that made me bear it until I had picked up all I could, and held the scraps upon a piece of exercise paper, wondering what I had better do with them.

"You had better wipe the butter off that window with your handkerchief, Miss Bozerne," said Miss Furness, stiffly. "Oh! and it's of no use for you to make up those indignant grimaces, and look like that, Miss Bozerne," she continued, in her nasty, vinegary way. "If young ladies are so forgetful of decorum, and cannot be content with a fair share of food at the tea table, but must gluttonously stoop to stealing pieces off the plate to devour at abnormal times, they must expect to be spoken to."

Now, was not that too bad? Just as if I

had taken the horrid stuff to eat, when so great was my agitation that I could partake of nothing. So there I was, with my face and neck burning in a most "abnormal" way, as Miss Furness would have called it, wiping and smearing the butter about over the pane of glass, and hardly seeing what I was doing for the tears; while there was that Patty Smith staring at me with her round, saucer eyes, and her mouth made round and open, as if it had been another eye, and Clara the whole time enjoying it all, and laughing at my discomfort; when it was really too bad, for it was all her fault, for the wicked, mischievous, impish creature had seen me put the pieces of bread and butter into my pocket, and had actually set Patty to snatch the handkerchief out.

"And the plan succeeded beyond my expectations, darling," she exclaimed afterwards, when we were alone; and I did not slap her—which, without boasting, must, I think, show how forgiving a spirit I possess.

But, to return to the bread and butter affair. When I had finished smearing the window with my pretty little cambric handkerchief, I threw open the sash, and was going to throw out the little pieces of bread crumbs for the poor little birds—

"Miss Bozerne!" exclaimed Miss Furness, "what are you about?"

"Going to give the crumbs to the birds, ma'am," I said, humbly.

"Oh, dear me, no," exclaimed the old puss, seizing upon what she considered a good opportunity for making an example of me, and giving a lesson to the other girls—while that seemed one of the aims of her life to make lessons out of everything she said or did, till she was a perfect nuisance. "Oh, dear me, no—such waste cannot be allowed. Go and put the fragments upon one of the plates, which James or the cook will give you, and ask her to save them for your breakfast."

I could have cried with vexation; but I did not, though it was very, very, very hard work to keep the tears back.

"Oh, Achille! Achille!" I murmured again, "c'est pour toi!"

And then, like a martyr, I walked out, bearing the pieces, with bent-down eyes, and gave them to the cook, telling her she was to give them to the chickens. For I would not have given Miss Furness's message if she had stood behind me.

Oh, yes, it was nice fun for the other girls,

and dearly they used to enjoy seeing me humbled, because I used to be rather distant, and would not make confidantes of ever so many; and when I went back, there they were upon the giggle, and Miss Furness not trying to check them one bit, as she would have done upon another occasion—which shows how partial and unjust she could be when she liked. But I soon forgot it all, engrossed as I was with the idea of what was coming that night. As to my next day's lessons, after sitting before them for an hour, I believe that I knew less about them than when I took out my books; for right up at the top of one of the panes in the buttery window there was a spider spinning its web, and that set me thinking about poor Achille hanging in a web, and the four old lesson grinders being spiders to devour him. For there was the nasty creepy thing hanging by one of its strings ever so far down, and that made me think about the coming night and the rope ladder, till I could, in my overwrought fancy, imagine I saw poor Achille bobbing and swinging about, and ready to go through one of the window panes every moment. Sometimes the very thought of it made my face burn, and my hands turn hot and damp as could be inside, just as they felt when one had shaken hands with Miss Furness, whose hand, in feel, was for all the world like the tail of a cod-fish.

Sometimes during that evening I felt in misery, and, I believe, all owing to that spider, and thinking of the danger of the feat to perform which I had lured poor Achille. I would have given anything to have been able to beg of him not to attempt it.

"Poor fly," I thought—"poor, beautiful, fluttering, brightly painted fly; and have I been the means of weaving a net to lure thee to destruction?" Oh, wretch that I am!"

And so I went on for some time, just as people do in books when they are very bad in their emotions; and that is one advantage in reading, only emotions are so much more eloquent than they would be, say, in an ignorant, unlettered person; and really, be it pleasure or pain, it is as well to be refined and make a grand display; for it is so much more satisfactory, even if the audience consists of self alone. At times, though, I was so elated that I could feel my eyes flash and sparkle with the thoughts that rushed through my brain; when, as if

reading my heart, Clara would creep close, and nip my arm, and keep on whispering—

"I'll tell—I'll tell."

THE CASUAL OBSERVER.

AMONGST THE LITTLE ONES.

THOSE who have travelled to Epsom Downs by the new line may remember that, just after passing Sutton, they saw on their right, standing amidst pasture and garden ground, where the pleasant open country rolled away on all sides, a vast red brick building of no mean architectural pretensions; and that, down by the railway fences, there were gathered in knots and clusters, cheering, laughing, and waving cap and handkerchief, about a thousand children—boys and girls.

To these children the merry holiday-keepers tossed halfpence as they rushed by, laughing to see the scramble—a fashion this money-throwing that, begun idly, brought great pleasure, for the coins were thrown to the children of the South Metropolitan District Schools, and one year, after the races, no less a sum than £40 was found to be the total collected—a sum which paid the expenses of a treat for the children to the Crystal Palace.

No light matter this; for these children are from the workhouses of South London—sent away from the close atmosphere of the streets at four years old, down to this pleasant country home; to come pale, sallow, and marked with the union stamp, and to grow in a few months, under the wise regulations of the Board and their highly intelligent superintendent, healthy, robust, and rosy. Children, that would have been the scum of our lowest neighbourhoods, taken up and made into useful members of society.

Reaching the huge building, which is the home of thirteen hundred children from four to fifteen years of age, I was in the midst of some sixty acres of carefully planned ground. In a large pasture were a score of healthy cows ruminating and grazing—"our dairy"—expressly for the children.

Farther on, a plot of rye grass for these same cows, yielding abundantly many crops a year, from the skilful arrangements of Mr. Hales for the distribution of the sewage. In a huge piggery were hogs that would have gladdened the heart of a Lincoln farmer—

—"our pigs," slain for the use of the house—certain of the boys learning the butcher's art on these days of doom.

One plot of ground was for supply for the live stock; others for the various vegetables required for the juvenile colony; and all this supply is raised here, the boys assisting largely in the gardening—a small brigade, basket and tool-armed, passing as the ground was traversed. But though gardening is largely carried on, that is not considered one of the important arts for a boy to learn, since it is but seldom that applications are made to the institution for boys able to do gardening or farming work.

Passing into a great paved yard surrounded by buildings, from one side come the tones of instruments. Here are boys practising for the band, into which those lads only are drafted who consent to pass into the army or navy. A few steps farther, and one enters a building where, under the supervision of three men, about a score of twelve-year-old cobblers are busy mending shoes with gutta percha, wax-ending, stitching, hammering, and nailing; and here, as in all other pursuits, half-time is the rule—one day industrial work, the next school.

Again a few steps, and one is amongst the tailors, where the little fellows are handling the goose, and stitching away merrily, repairing flaws in half-worn garments, making the neat, dark cloth jackets or cord trousers worn by the boys, or the natty little military-looking cloth caps. Over these there are, of course, master tailors and a cutter.

Other workshops succeed, and in one place the boys are cooks, in another whitened all over as they punch the bread and prepare batches as bakers. Here are boys helping the carpenters, and gaining the rudiments of the trade, even as other little fellows are busy painting, plumbing, and glazing, or bricklaying; for the repairs of the great place, in a minor degree, are carried out by the lads and their superintendent.

Another of the long, low buildings is the lavatory, capitally fitted, and with a regiment of jack towels; while at the back is a huge long tank, shallow, and fitted with taps for hot and cold water. This is the once a week general over-all cleaner, and is a custom almost without appeal. In the next building, though, is a great bath, for the most part constructed by the boys, and here they are taught swimming. This is newly intro-

duced, and is in a great measure due to the efforts of Mr. Tufnell, the inspector.

The side apportioned to the girls is similar in its arrangements—schools, dormitories, and rooms admirable in order and cleanliness. For industrial pursuits, the girls are here busy sewing; there are half a score of healthy little housemaids; and where steam and heat predominate there are busy hands folding and ironing—the washing being performed by women-supervised machinery.

Passing to the officers' dining-room, four girls were busy as so many neat little parlour-maids; and such handy and useful little domestic servants are the girls here made, that it is quite impossible to supply the constant demand; while when placed out in service the institute does not cease its paternal control, for the girls are visited and their welfare looked into.

Strains of music took us back into the great paved yard, where, under their drill-master, 600 boys were standing in companies, with sergeant and corporal complete, and to the merry tune, played admirably by the band, the little fellows marched—a goodly regiment of the rough, raw material of our streets made valuable and ready for the master's hand—into the great dining-hall, where the girls were already assembled. Grace was sung, and then about a thousand children sat down, healthy and happy-looking, to their meal.

Poor little Oliver Twists to their gruel? Nothing of the kind! Huge tins were borne down the middle of the room, and the elder boys and girls were waiters. Each child's portion was a good plateful of meat, suet pudding, and cabbage. The meat was minced beef—Australian—and was rich, good, and excellently prepared. It is no exaggeration to say that it was fit for the table of any gentleman in our land. And quite a boon this Austral meat has proved; for it makes a saving of nine pounds sterling per week in providing for this great family.

A visit to the infants' dining-room showed long rows of little mites, and to these the supply of food is unlimited; but they have not the healthy look of those longer in residence. The infirmary arrangements were admirable, and one room, containing about twenty beds, was perfectly empty, for there is very little serious sickness.

A great problem is solved within this institution, for we are shown what can be made of the refuse of our streets, since here these

waifs become well educated, trained members of society, ready to engage in the future battle of life armed with a trade, instead of being helpless, shiftless objects, a burden to the community, and frequently also to themselves. Of course, merely the rudiments of trades can be given, since, as a rule, the children begin the world before the age of fifteen.

ONLY A YEAR.

CHAPTER XVI.

"POOR PHIL!"

IT was towards the end of June that Kittie and her husband came to spend a fortnight at the Manor House, before sailing for Canada. Nothing could be more free from envy than the loving interest Phillis took in noting and making sure of her sister's happiness. Yet, while her heart gladdened to see unmistakable confirmations of it, she could not but feel a passionate regret and self-pity for her own fate. She had lost much of the pride which had once before enabled her to queen it wherever she went, and among the gay and fair to be ever the gayest and most beautiful. Now, at any rate, "no one knew"—her grand consolation; for there was no necessity that she should appear happier than she was. She, who had laughed at wounds, felt now how terrible a thing an aching scar may be. She had undergone so much from "hope deferred," that she could not rouse herself to enact even a semblance of the laughter-loving, satirical Phillis whom her girl friends had known, or the haughty, wilful, capricious Miss Kyriel whom men had admired.

"I never thought Phillis could have been so very fond of Kittie," Grace Grainger remarked, as she drove from the Manor House, with her friend Florence Rose, back to Hensley, where she was spending a few days. "She is so altered, and has lost her spirits so much since Kittie married."

"I think she looks ill," returned Florence. "Don't you notice the shadows she has under her eyes—they never used to be there; and she seems so distant and silent, and to have none of her old fun in her."

"I am afraid she does too much for her mother now, and is too much with her. She has quite devoted herself to her since Kittie went, and sits in Mrs. Kyriel's hot rooms for hours together."

"I believe she will take poor Ashley,

after all—what do you say, Grace? And she has not so very much time to lose now. Is she four or five and twenty?"

"She will be twenty-four in September. Do you know, Florence—I never said this before—but I fancy Phil never quite got over her first love affair with poor Hasson; and I wish, indeed, that he had married her long ago."

"Have you heard from him lately?"

For Grace's face became sombre and mournful.

"Yes, a few days since. I told you, you know, about Mr. Thyrle paying me a lot of money he said he owed him; and Hasson was so anxious to know how I got it, that I was obliged to tell him, although I had promised not to. Don't you think, Florence, if it had been a debt that Hasson would have guessed about it at once? Well, I sent him three hundred at first; but I told him I had much more when that was done. I could not bear to think of him in want, dear fellow! I heard from him in a fortnight, from one of those horrible gambling places—Wiesbaden, I think"—poor Grace's soft eyes filled—"and he said he had gone through it all. What could I do but send him more? Oh, Florence," she hid her face now, "it was so soon all gone! Lucy and I have given him our whole allowance for the year, and we have nothing else; and such heartrending letters come to us from him. He says he is utterly ruined, starving! and we dare not say a word about him to papa. What do you think we ought to do, Florence?"

"Let him starve," replied that young lady, drily.

"But he is our only brother, dear," rejoined Grace, very sadly; "such a clever, handsome fellow, and might have done so well if he only had not been so extravagant; and poor mamma was so proud and fond of him."

"Dear Grace, don't fret about him—he will come to no harm, trust me; and it will do him all the good in the world to have to work for himself. I think brothers are sent us for our crosses. When that boy of ours is at home from Eton, the life he leads us is distressing to contemplate, even from a distance of four or five months. Isn't Gus a plague?"

She had called up a smile to Grace's lips by the mere mention of "Gus."

"But all brothers are not alike. Look

how Phil and Kittie love Gilfred Kyriel; and how good he is to them, and to his mother."

Florence shrugged her shoulders.

"My dear, if there were not some good men in the world, what would become of us? There are few enough good women. I know of none except yourself and Lucy."

"Florence!" exclaimed Grace, indignantly, "how can you say such things? Kittie Kyriel was the best, kindest, sweetest-tempered girl I ever knew; and Phil, if she has faults, is as noble and good-hearted as she can be."

"You enthusiastic little Grace! How I wish some men were here to listen to you, for they always say we never praise each other cordially. Not that I agree with you. Kittie, I dare say, was all very well—I never knew much of her; but Phillis Kyriel is just about as wicked a girl as ever I hope to come across. Fancy, par exemple, at our ball in the spring, she actually contrived to make that handsome Colonel Dynesford fall in love with her! He wrote to papa the other day, to ask him if he might come here for a few days; and it's as plain to me as the road home why he is coming. He absolutely raved about her all the time he was here before; and probably she will toss her pretty head at him, and send him off, sur-le-champ, in the usual way."

"Poor Phil!" said Grace, compassion and deprecation in her tone.

It had been evident to Grace's perceptions for some time past that Phillis was suffering, but whether physically or morally she could not decide. Phillis always declared herself "quite well;" but her listless step, her occasional efforts after mirth she did not feel, and the traces left by watching and weeping, had attracted her friend's attention.

Sir George and Lady Rose issued a number of invitations to a dance, and some dinner parties which were to take place during Colonel Dynesford's visit; but to none of them could Miss Kyriel be persuaded to go, in spite of both written and verbal entreaties. Sir George himself, accompanied by the colonel, called the day before the dance, to beg her to change her mind.

"A ball won't be like a ball in Knollinghamshire," said Sir George, "unless our Beauty is present."

But Phillis only laughed, and said she was too old to be called by such a title,

and that it was time she gave up such gay doings.

The colonel urged all sorts of flattering speeches and anxious arguments in vain. She replied, gently enough, that her mother had none but herself now to care for her, and that she could not leave her.

Upon this, Sir George blurted out—

"Kittie and you both used to leave her often enough, not so long ago."

"It is for that I reproach myself now," answered Phillis, a faint colour coming and going, and her long dark eyelashes bent down. "I want to make up for my neglect then by the little which lies in my power now."

If anything could have been added to complete the entire subjugation of Colonel Dynesford, it was "this new whim," as Sir George called it, of Miss Kyriel's.

How lovely, how unselfish, how charming she was! There never could have been or would be another woman like her! And very flat, stale, and unprofitable appeared to Colonel Dynesford the hospitable entertainments of his host, and the efforts made for his amusement. He haunted the Manor House on the most absurd pretences, would go any distance for a mere chance of meeting Phillis; and the only other girls he would deign to notice were Grace and Lucy Grainger, because they were never tired of praising and talking of their friend Phil.

"Not so long ago," according to Sir George's expression, the colonel would have fared very differently. He would not have found the Manor House so impracticable a place to gain admittance into; he need not have lurked in vain among the fields and roads surrounding it, as he now did; he would not have searched so hopelessly in the lovely face, when he did see it, for one glance of encouragement, or listened with a sinking heart to the utterly cold tones of that voice which could be so caressing. For once in her life Miss Kyriel repelled—without words, certainly, but quite as decidedly—the first advances to her favour from a man rich, high-born, and distinguished. She would not go where she thought it even possible to meet him, and when obliged to encounter him, she treated him with an air of quiet, lady-like indifference, most quelling even to devotion like his, and ignored his presence as much as was consistent with civility.

Although the Roses and others who were

looking on at the little comedy declared it was but a new and clever form of Phil's usual proceedings, wondered how long it would last, and what would be her next move, she held out long enough to drive Colonel Dynesford to despair. It was impossible to make love to a girl who would hardly vouchsafe to answer or look at him; it was equally impossible to ask her to marry him, after the unequivocal signs of indifference, if not dislike, which she now invariably displayed towards him. He was little accustomed to be defeated, especially where he had set his mind—not to mention his affections; but he was wise enough to know when to use the better part of valour, yielded to circumstances, and beat a retreat.

Lord Ashley was much gratified by this new freak of Miss Kyriel's; and arguing vaguely, in his somewhat opaque mind, that it was a good omen for himself, he drove his bays over to the Manor House, and deemed himself fortunate to encounter Phillis at the entrance gates, returning from a walk. Down came Lord Ashley from the height of his elevated trap, and committing the reins to his groom, walked beside Miss Kyriel up to the house.

It was a hot day, late in July, and she looked paler than usual; and she was weary with a great weariness—not of body only, but of soul. She threw her hat aside as they entered the cool, fragrant drawing-room.

"It is long since I have been here," observed Lord Ashley.

"Yes. My brother has been gone several months," she replied, as if Gilfred's presence could alone account for his lordship's.

Phillis would not exert herself to amuse him, and he racked his brains in the hope of finding something in them to please her.

"Colonel Dynesford has gone, I hear," was the result, after considerable research.

"Indeed?"

"Rather nice fellow," with some anxiety.

"Was he?"

"Didn't you think so?"

"I scarcely knew anything of him."

Another pause.

"Pretty your flowers are—and sweet, by Jove, too," he said at length, in the tone of one who has made an entirely new discovery.

"Yes," was the laconic response.

Phillis was wondering how soon she could possibly get rid of him.

"How's your mother?" was his next effort—a very bright idea, for it brought a gleam of interest into the tired features before him.

"She is much better, thank you. She has been stronger this summer than I ever remember her."

Lord Ashley would willingly have prolonged the discourse on this subject; but finding no better remark to offer than "Doosid glad to hear it," received no reply.

After another silence, during which, in spite of her weariness, Phillis had to struggle to keep a smile out of sight, she rang the bell, and ordered some claret and ice for his lordship, which, when it came, afforded at least occupation for him; and he seized on the opportunity of saying that ice was an awfully good invention in summer, and met with the usual response.

When he had disposed of a goblet of claret, Phillis hoped he would depart; instead of which, he said, with evident difficulty—

"You are not going into a convent—Sister of Mercy game—Miss Kyriel, are you?"

Phillis at last opened her eyes wide, in surprise.

"I never had such an idea."

"Well, people do say such confounded impertinent things, that it's as well to know the truth and be able to shut 'em up. Glad of it, too."

But of what, the complexity of his grammar rendered uncertain.

To her dismay, he presently changed his seat to one close beside her.

"You know, it would—would play Old Gooseberry with me if you did come that sort of thing," was the somewhat figurative language in which he endeavoured to explain his feelings.

She made an effort to rouse herself.

"Lord Ashley, I wish you would understand that my movements need never be of any interest or consequence to you."

"By Jove!" he returned, with more animation than usual. "What the—the doose" (he was quite unable to discover a better figure of speech) "should be of consequence to me, if you are not? You—'pon my soul, you are the only girl I ever felt an interest in. Don't you know it?"

Such a sad smile met his eyes! Had Phillis lost all her bright looks?

"Dear Lord Ashley—I like you very much, and I believe you thoroughly. You have so often given me proofs that you care for me, which I have never deserved—"

"By Jove! yes, you know, and I do."

"Which I have never deserved," she went on, "that I begin to be afraid that your—unfortunate liking for me may stand in the way of your happiness."

"No, by Jove!" exclaimed Lord Ashley. "Miss Kyriel, I would give all I have in the world"—it was not very much, poor fellow!—"if I could persuade you to marry me. I have told you so before—and—and you laughed at me. Have I any better chance now?"

He held his breath, in his anxiety; but the velvety eyes looked up gravely and earnestly.

"I am so sorry you have said this to me again. I wanted to spare you this. Don't think of me any more, and—forgive me for—my folly—my vanity, in ever allowing you to deceive yourself. I blame myself very much."

She did not find it easy to say this, being unaccustomed to sue for pardon or own her faults. She gave him her hand.

"We can be friends still," she added, with some earnestness—"and friends only. Think of me as kindly as you can. I would not have given you this pain if I could have helped it."

He only grasped her slender hand tightly, and answered, in a low voice—

"Good-bye, then, Phillis. I see it's all up with me now; but you are a dear, good girl, in spite of all they may say."

And she was free to sink on the couch, and pour out her heart alone, in all its longing and hopelessness for the one voice from which alone words of love sounded sweet to her.

Then, after a struggle, she conquered herself, and she went, with a quiet face, to her mother's room.

Ever since Phillis could remember, her mother had more or less suffered from acute neuralgic attacks in her head and back, so severe as to render her powerless and prostrate for days afterwards. Many physicians had been consulted, but few held the same opinions, or recommended like remedies. Some said her spine was affected, others that she suffered from acute rheumatism; again, that her whole system was disorganized; and by one, about twelve years ago,

she had been told that her brain was softening, and that she could not possibly live a year. Buxton, Baden, Ems, Batte had been resorted to in vain; and she had at length decided to bear patiently what seemed to be her fate—which she did very, very patiently.

But a great improvement had taken place in Mrs. Kyriel's health of late. Phillis had done more than all the doctors for her, by her constant care and supervision of her comforts, her frequent companionship—always cheerful; for Phillis forced the clouds from her face in her mother's presence—and very regular little drives when the weather allowed in an open carriage, which had hitherto been considered out of the question, all contributed to restore strength and energy to Mrs. Kyriel's delicate frame.

Phillis scarcely realized at the time how much it was to her then to have some prominent interest, some object for which to live. She was so utterly crushed by her strange sorrow, her pride was so humbled, that she felt she possessed neither strength nor spirit to carry on the farce of former years. Had she dared—had she felt good enough to dare it—she would often have been thankful could she have laid down and found for her weary, troubled, bruised heart eternal silence and rest; but death comes seldom to the young and strong, and Phillis had to go through the everlasting routine of sleeping, waking, eating, and drinking, which the saddest and the most happy in this world endure alike. And her gentle, suffering, uncomplaining mother was rebuke enough for a harder nature than that of Phillis. In her desolation, she had found a new pure pleasure, her only one, in soothing her mother's pain, in watching by her sleepless hours, in striving to ward off the foe; in reading or singing to her, and exerting all her singular powers to amuse or interest when she was able to bear it. Much as Mrs. Kyriel treasured the memory of tender-hearted Kittie, she soon learned to almost worship Phillis, who bestowed not only nearly all her time on her, but brought forth all her talents and intellectual gifts to please her, crowning all by her devoted affection.

It was one day in August that Phillis, after some entreaty, went to dine at Hernsley. It was to be quite a quiet family party—only one stranger, and he was an elderly

man, a celebrated physician, Sir Anthony Froome.

In spite of his sixty years, and the fact that he had a wife and grown-up sons and daughters, Sir Anthony Froome retained a very correct eye for a beautiful face and figure.

"That Miss Kyriel," he remarked to Sir George, when the ladies left the two old gentlemen alone in the dining-room, "is a most picturesque-looking creature. I don't know where I have seen such a face and figure."

"We are rather proud of her about here," returned Sir George.

"I should think so. She reminds me of the loveliest of Lawrence's pictures—so stately, yet graceful and natural. But what makes the girl look so ill and melancholy?"

"Well, she used to be the gayest, wildest witch in the county—a terrible flirt, too, let me tell you; no knowing the mischief she has done. But her sister married in the spring, and she seemed to feel her loss a good deal—they had always been together, you know—and her brother went abroad; so the whole responsibility and care about her mother—a sad invalid—has fallen on Phillis here. She really has altered in a most curious way of late, when one comes to think of it. But she is a very charming girl, and might marry any day; but there's no understanding these women, you know."

After this little biography, the doctor's interest increased; and he took an opportunity in the evening to ask Phillis if he might pay a friendly visit to her mother, if she would think an old fellow's advice worth having.

The result was a very rational prescribed course of tonic, dieting, and careful exercise, all followed to the very letter by the anxious Phillis; the consequence being a still greater improvement in Mrs. Kyriel's health.

But in December, Gilfred in Canada received one or two letters from his sister with entreaties in them like this—

"Mamma has had some very severe attacks, and has grown strangely nervous and irritable of late. I have written to Sir Anthony, but all he will say is, 'Come to London. I must have her under my own eyes for a month or two.' I am very anxious and worried about this, for I don't know what to do. How can we go to London alone, or to what part? I wish so much

you could come over—isn't it your time for long leave?—and see about this for me. I feel so dreadfully lonely."

This resulted in Gilfred's obtaining three months' leave, and arriving at Liverpool very early in the month of January.

TABLE TALK.

THERE must be some little satisfaction in belonging to the French Parliament. A member could go into the House, and not necessarily fall asleep. Here is a specimen of how they do these things better in France—"The Minister of War could hardly obtain a hearing, and M. Rouher came to his assistance with the statement that he should take upon himself the duty of discovering the authorship of the circular. He then retorted on the ex-Dictator with the remark that he had quite enough to answer for in respect to his own conduct, without attacking the Bonapartists. The taunt seems to have maddened Gambetta out of his self-possession. He rushed back into the tribune, pointed to M. Rouher and his associates, and called them 'ces misérables'—a term which is only feebly interpreted by the word 'wretches'—who had brought ruin and desolation on France. On being called to order by M. Buffet, M. Gambetta positively refused to apologize, and shrieked out that he intended the epithet for more than an insult—for a flétrissure. Finally, the sitting broke up in disorder, and M. Gambetta and the extreme Republicans followed the Bonapartist deputies to the refreshment rooms, hooting and shouting at them through the corridors." The game of politics seems to be a warm one in that country there, as the French say. At all events, members would get a little more excitement for their money.

"CONTRADICTION," says a daily paper, "has been officially given to a report which gained currency in Berlin that the Imperial Prince met with an accident while driving across the railway. The only ground for the report seems to have been the simple fact that a gate through which the Prince had to pass was closed when the train came in sight; and had it not been opened in time, the casualty might have happened." Now this is curious, and savours mightily of the local paper reporter, who, fishing for

news in a little place where news is scarce, makes marvels out of mites, and announcing the fact "that Mr. Tubbs the butcher's horse, having been startled by the crack of a whip, ran rapidly down the High-street, taking with him the cart, until stopped by our respected fellow-townsmen, Mr. James W. Tompkins. Had the horse started an hour sooner, when the children were leaving the national school, there is no knowing how frightful an accident might have happened"—if the children had not got out of the way, even as the railway gate was opened in time.

WHAT WOULD the members of the Hogarth or Langham Clubs say to the laws laid down by Messer Cennino, pupil of Agnolo, son of Taddeo of Florence, the son of Taddeo, godson and disciple of Giotto? He says that—"You must study drawing for at least one year; then you must remain with a master at the workshop for the space of six years at least, that you may learn all the parts and members of the art—to grind colours, to boil down glues, to grind plaster." There were no Newman's, and Winsor and Newton's, in those days; and the blessed Roberson had never invented his medium. Messer Cennino did nothing lightly: here is the opening of his instructions to make paste of flour—"Beginning to paint pictures in the name of the most Holy Trinity, and always invoking this name and that of the glorious Virgin Mary, we must prepare a foundation, and this is made with various kinds of glues. There is a cement made of boiled paste," &c., &c. Our young artists would not like to turn colour grinders for six years.

"DON'T BE TEMPTED into purchasing a drawing-room suite of walnut," says a friend. "The very name is ominous; for what would you expect of walnut but that it should crack?"

All Contributions are attentively considered, and unaccepted MSS. are returned on receipt of stamps for postage; but the Editor cannot hold himself responsible for any accidental loss. No unaccepted MSS. will be returned until a written application has been made for them.

Communications to the Editor should be addressed to the Office, 19, Tavistock-street, Covent-garden, W. C.

Terms of Subscription to ONCE A WEEK, free by post:—Weekly Numbers for Six Months, 5s. 5d.; Monthly Parts, 5s. 8d.

ONCE A WEEK

NEW SERIES.

No. 339.

June 27, 1874.

Price 2d.

JACK'S SISTER; OR, WOMANLY PAST QUESTION.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

DISCOVERED.



LIFTON AND Baby playing her false!

Jack's own betrothed wife, and the friend who had been to him as a brother—with

whom he would have trusted his soul—voluntarily to sink to this unutterable degradation! It seemed—it must be

—it was impossible. How dared their own neighbours and friends believe in so infamous a slander! How dared they repeat

it to her, when Jack was not at her side to fling back the lie in their faces! The reaction came as quick as the blow. While Mrs. Hamilton and Mrs. Griffiths were still speaking, making haste now to pour out the testimonies which were to them sufficient and damning proofs of what they asserted, Enid turned round on them, her pale face glowing with generous indignation, her tall, lissome figure drawn up to its full height.

"Please excuse me," she said, her voice clear as a bell, and with the gesture of a young queen—"I would rather not hear any more. My brother would be angry if I were even to listen to what you are telling me. I thought our own townspeople would have known us better than to believe such things possible, and talk about them behind our backs."

"But, my dear Enid, begging your par-

don," said Mrs. Griffiths—who, being the "grande dame" in her own village, did not like being put down—"if you are so angry at being spoken to to your face, I don't wonder at people talking behind your back. It's a very sad and shocking thing, of course; and Mr. Gore ought to be ashamed—"

"Mrs. Griffiths," said Enid, haughtily—and wherever the sudden spirit came from in one so gentle, I can hardly tell—"Mr. Gore would be ashamed if he heard the interpretation which those who ought to know him better have put on his kindness and courtesy. He does not need my vindication; but perhaps I ought to tell you that it is at my brother's particular request, and to show his regard for us, that he has spared so much time and trouble in assisting us to make Miss Delamayne's visit here pleasant, and look after her as Jack's brother would in Jack's absence."

She spoke with so much fire and energy, with such a glow of noble indignation, that Mrs. Hamilton began to feel a little shaken, and to stammer out something about—"perhaps they might have been mistaken;" but others were not so easily convinced, and Mrs. Griffiths answered, boldly—

"Well, Enid, you may be very credulous; but I think sitting in a boat on the river at nine o'clock at night, and spooning along those lonely lanes between this and Gurley's Farm, as I saw them just now, is filling Jack's place a little too much for Jack's pleasure. You are very wise, my dear; but, pray, did you know where Miss Delamayne was this afternoon before I told you?"

"Yes, Mrs. Griffiths, I did," Enid answered, promptly; "and I will tell you, if you like. She has been lunching with Mrs. Clifford; and Mr. Gore has kindly undertaken to see her home, in compliance with the last direction I gave her that she should not come alone. I am much obliged to him for taking the trouble, and should have been very much surprised if he had brought

her by the dusty high road, in preference to the lanes, on such a hot day as this. If you please, as I am on my way to meet them, and only came in to tell Mrs. Hamilton that Aunt Jane was better, I will not delay any longer, or we might cross each other, and Baby would be disappointed. Good-bye. I am sorry you should make such a mistake about us as to suppose we could have any secrets from one another."

And so saying, with a little dignified bow to each, Enid left the group, which had been unanimous on her arrival, and was now broken up into half a dozen diversities of opinion.

"At the best," Mrs. Griffiths persisted, as she buttoned a very bulgy dogskin glove with a jerk, "it's a deal too familiar to be respectable. Jack Leyburn mayn't mind having his wife talked about, but I do; and I don't let my girls get intimate with the young lady, even if she does come to the altar after all, that I tell you."

"Just fancy Miss Leyburn being so angry," cried Miss Peel Douglas, an old maid, who, having been the most virulent before Enid's appearance, had been the most silent since. "Even if there is no real harm in it, she might have taken a warning kindly, instead of flying out at us all in that imperious way."

"Oh, I don't blame Enid," said Mrs. Griffiths, good-naturedly. "She's an honest, clean-minded girl; and of course such things would seem the worst sort of slander to her if they weren't true. I wonder if she really believes what she says, and is going to meet them."

She was a good bit on her way by that time, walking rapidly, with cheeks flushed and head erect; but before long the colour died out and faded, till the grave young face gleamed waxy-white from out of its black bonnet; and the eyes, so bright a moment ago, began to fill slowly with large salt tears, which gathered and fell, one by one, upon her clasped hands, without her being aware of them. She had not begun to lose faith, even yet; but that such things should be said—that such foul ideas should come into people's minds, and be believed, was a new and utterly heart-breaking experience in Enid's life. "Every one had been talking," Mrs. Hamilton said, talking of *them*, the Leyburns—whose name had never known smutch or soil from its first founding; and of Clifton, their hero friend. Oh! if it had

been any one else; but that he should be so attainted; and the archdeacon's wife, his and their oldest friend in the place, believe it! It seemed too incredible, too cruel. What did they mean by being in a boat at night? That must have been the evening Baby lost her way, and came in so late. She had said "a man" had put her in the right road. Could the man have been Clifton? Oh, no, surely those others must have been mistaken; for, if so, why had not Baby mentioned his name? What could have taken her on the river? And, by the way, why had Baby never mentioned her luncheon engagement till Enid had proposed a walk, or said that Clif was to be of the party? He had called to leave a book for her on the previous day, and must surely have said something about it. Why, too, had she grown so insistent on the necessity of her daily constitutional since Enid had been kept in the house? and why did Clif never happen to call when she was out on these expeditions?

Question after question—unbidden and fiercely repelled—would keep rising to Enid's mind. Trifles light as air, forgotten or never noticed at the time, came back now, and made the clear brain swim in an agony of giddy, sickening misery. She could not and would not believe in the possibility of such sin and shame where she had given her heart so entirely. But that it should be possible to accuse them of it—that Clifton's manner, or Baby's imprudence, should have been such as to give a handle to gossip and slander, was sufficient humiliation to cut the sturdy citizen pride of the Leyburns to the core.

And if it were true? If it could be?

On and on she walked, neither looking to the right nor the left—never asking where she was going, never pausing to consider which turning to take; led by chance or Providence, with confidence dying out at every step, with her own mangled trust crushed flat beneath the swift, unflinching feet; with hope fading to a shadow, yet resolutely held before her eyes; with the hot sun upon her head, and the loose red soil of the country staining the edge of her black skirt. On and on, till, turning round the bole of a huge beech which stood at the junction of three lanes, she paused for the first time, irresolute as to which path to take. Two ragged children were making mud pies in the ditch outside a field where their mother was gleaning; and to them

Enid appealed, not very hopefully, had they seen a lady and gentleman—a very pretty young lady, in a blue dress—pass that way?

One of the brats stared up at her with that stolid, hopeless stupidity so delightfully gratifying in our English peasantry, and answered nothing. The other must, I think, have had some gipsy blood in her; for after clearing the mat of rusty black hair from before her eyes, she spoke, not wholly unintelligently—

"Lady wi' th' yaller hair all floppin' roun' her body?"

"Yes," Enid answered—her mouth very dry, a strange sickness at her heart.

"Seed un just now. Didn't us, Tommy?"

"Her as passens our 'oose moster days wi' her 'yoong mon," said Tommy, finding voice to answer his friend. "Aye, theer a-coortin' somewheers in t' coorn field nigh the river."

"Him jumped her o'er the style theer, while agone," the girl added. "Tommy, yer mither's callin'."

And off she scudded into the field, closely followed by Tommy, whose momentary flash of courage and reason died out immediately in an insane dread of being left behind with the lady.

Enid stood still, the dead sickness surging up over her whole spirit in one mighty wave. Hope was dead: killed by one sentence from an illiterate little rustic, with scarcely a whole rag on his body, as no warnings or representations from all her lady friends put together could have slain it; and with hope her heart seemed to die as well. Other griefs, even more personal and undeserved, she was to know in days yet to come; but I doubt if the anguish they awakened was greater than that which found words in the low cry—

"My brother! oh, my brother!"

One step she took towards the stile indicated, and then stood still. For the first time the question asked itself—what was she going to see, and why she should go to see it? She had been convinced, suddenly and without any moral doubt, of the double treachery played by the man who had been her lover, the girl who was her friend. Why humiliate herself by forcing her eyes to see that from which her soul shrank as from some plague-stricken body? Why thrust herself into the position of a spy, and so oblige herself to touch and handle that from which her native purity would fain have

kept itself unspotted to the end? Eleven out of a dozen girls, reared as religiously and guarded from evil as systematically as Enid, would have turned instinctively, and leaving the traitors to their treachery, would have fled from their vicinity, to weep and pray for them in the sanctuary of home. The temptation to do so came to her also; but she resisted it. Under all the selfish and narrowing influence of twenty-two years' education in Anglican proprieties, the native nobility of the girl refused to obey its dictates—remove herself from the evil-doers, lest the shadow of their evil should be reflected on her whiteness; give up the girl who had abused her trust; and, shutting herself within the temple of her own virtue, close eyes and ears against the contamination of any intercourse with those fallen ones whom it was too late to save.

It was too late. She knew that—knew that even if another man could have forgiven Baby for dragging his name through the dirt, Jack would not—that the parting must come, and wife and friend be blotted out in the infinite darkness of an irredeemable wrong. And yet her heart yearned for them. Why, if they must fall, should they fall so dishonourably, instead of openly confessing their weakness to the man they had injured? It would not undo the injury; but it would be something not quite so degrading as plotting in secret and betraying with smiles. Better that she should stamp under foot the scruples and shrinkings of her own girlish modesty, and, going in boldly between them, take back this stray lamb to her protection; if so, Clifton might be forced to ask for her openly in the light of day, or let her go in peace to her father—shielded under the name of the man who would have been her husband, and the sister whose unsullied robe should cover even her blackness.

It was the month of July, and a day more perfect than often falls to the lot of this land of ours—golden, flower-scented, filled to the brim with the drowsy incense of unclouded summer. The corn stood ripe and yellow around her, bending its laden heads to touch her arm and dress in mute sympathy, as she made her way under the hedge which bounded the field. Myriads of scarlet poppies opened their blood-red mouths, as if to drink in what the all-seeing sun told them, and nodded in languid reprobation to the dark blue corn-flowers which stood near, quivering like azure stars

knotted together on one slender stalk. Below, the river rippled and ran, flashing like golden laughter behind the fringe of young trees whose tender foliage made a flickering shadow over the grassy bank and rustling corn. It was all so bright, so fair and sunny—so like other days, long gone, when she had tripped along this very path, happy and light-hearted, with Merle at her side, and Jack and Clif marching on in front, arm and arm, or climbing up the tallest trees, and tumbling down again with a handful of nuts, or a bird's nest broken into a liquefied mass in the fall. What merry shouts of laughter had shivered over the corn then! What delightful adventures taken place under those slender trees, or along the river's bank, where—

My God! how suddenly the childish visions died out before the picture which met her eyes now! She had come upon them before she was aware.

They sat close together, on the buttercup-sprinkled bank, under a waving birch tree. Clifton's hat was off, leaving his sunny hair uncovered; and Baby was speaking—speaking so earnestly, that, as Enid stopped short, in the uncontrollable misery of the situation, every word reached her quite distinctly.

"He comes to-morrow," she said, looking up in her companion's face. "It is all over, Clifton—all the sunshine and the happiness. I must go home now, and then it will just be ended; and I cannot bear it. I *cannot*. I hate his coming, and I hate him. Oh, help me! Tell me what I shall do!"

And her small hands plucked and scattered at the lapful of poppies she held, like white doves in a nest of scarlet flame.

"I help you!" cried Clif, his voice very tender, but his handsome face pale with pain and embarrassment—"I wish to Heaven I could. If I had ever thought of this—but indeed, indeed I never did—I would have cut my throat rather. What can I do for you now, but go away? I will go to-morrow, if you like—to-day even. Dear Baby, don't look so miserable. You can't mean what you say—about hating, I mean. You are so young, you don't know your own feelings! or how little I deserve your caring. For God's sake, don't cry, dear child! It is my fault. We have been mad—foolish; but I will go away. I will never see you again; only don't cry, unless you want to punish me as I deserve."

"I can't help it," Baby sobbed, plaintively.

"Clifton, don't go — don't leave me. I ought not to have told you that I cared for —for—but it was our last day; and I thought —I *did* think—oh, why were you so kind before? Why did you come with me to-day, if you meant to be cruel, and leave me alone—to them."

"Cruel!" Clif echoed, his voice hoarse with emotion. "My poor little flower! But you don't think. What else *can* I do? You —Baby, you can't break faith with him! This is only a foolish fancy, which will go when I am gone. I wish I had never seen you."

"Do you?" said Baby, very low and brokenly. "Then you hate me. You *want* to let me go."

She was looking up at him—her face, flushed with delicate carmine, close under his; her eyes wide opened, humid, glittering with large tears, which hung like liquid diamonds on the long, curled lashes, lifted in very Circean appeal; her whole form heaving and panting with emotion against his arm, her hands clasping his, like warm flakes of living snow—a temptress more powerful, in her exquisite, child-like beauty and helpless grief, than the most skilled queen of coquetry in olden days.

"Hate you!" Clif echoed, tenderly; and involuntarily his arm closed round her, folding her to him, his fingers tightened on her clinging hand, his head bent lower, and two pairs of lips met in one passionate, guilty kiss.

There was a stir in the ripened grain, a step upon the sunlit turf, and both looked up.

Enid stood between the bearded ears, gazing full upon them!

BULLIONDUST'S SECRETARY.

CHAPTER IV.

"MAY I sit here, if even only for a moment?" asked Sydney, respectfully.

"Certainly—I shall be very glad," murmured the astonished maiden.

Roll on, bright river! Bloom on, fair summer flowers! Sing on, gay birds! For the monarch is upon his throne, and all that makes life worth having is shedding its fragrance around ye. Two hearts are fusing themselves into one, and the link that is to bind them for ever is being forged by the Nasmyth hammer of Master Cupid himself.

Is this the act of a true man, Sydney Ruthven? Is this fair, and honourable, and above board?

Recollect who and what you are. Recollect who and what she is. Tax your conscience, if you possess one. Are you not using every wile, every art, every effort you are master of to induce this fair young girl to think favourably of you, if not to bestow her affections upon you? And you? Is this a whim, a caprice? An act of wantonness? Is it *pour passer le temps*? Or is it in the meanness of human nature to revenge yourself for an act of justifiable coldness on her part? Who and what are you? Whose garments are these? Is there a coin in one of your silken pockets? Is there a red cent at any bank to your credit? Are you not the starveling scrivener, the hired servant, the inky menial of Mr. John Bulliondust?

You cannot help it! It is your destiny. If you had £100,000 to-morrow, you'd lay it at her feet! Away with such trumpery nonsense! You haven't £100,000, and much less would do if you had it. Crush it up, sir, like an opera hat. Sit upon it; dance upon it; take it, and fling it over the garden wall of your thoughts, like a weed.

The first dinner-bell rang from the clock tower.

"How the time has flown!" innocently exclaimed the young girl.

"There is no measure for time when one is as happy as I have been," murmured Sydney Ruthven.

"We shall see you at dinner," observed Miss Delmington, as they drew near the Hall.

"You will not."

And here the shadow fell thick and heavy upon him.

"And wherefore, pray?"

"Because I am poor and proud."

"Poverty is no crime."

"Socially, it is considerably worse. I go back to dream of the past. Good day."

And he strode away in the direction from whence they had come. Yes; he went back to the beech tree, instead of going to his dinner. He fed upon the thoughts of the past instead of soups, and fishes, and entrées. He drank in the music of her voice, instead of hock, champagne, and Comet claret. He sat upon the grassy bank instead of a morocco-covered chair. In a word, he proved

himself an ass by the easiest known method of computation.

Miss Delmington pleaded a headache as an excuse for not going down to dinner.

"He said he would go back to dream of the past. I would give anything to know if he means the riverside, and the place where we sat just now."

Love laughs at locksmiths. Miss Delmington—whilst the author of her being and his guests were solemnly disposing of the good things of this life, and pompously regretting her absence—quietly escaped through a postern-gate (we use this term advisedly—it sounds much better than back door), and, by taking a very circuitous route through a plantation, arrived exactly in front of the well-remembered beech tree, but with the river between them, and closely screened from observation. Sydney Ruthven, true to his word, was reclining beneath the tree, and ever and anon pressing something to his hay-coloured moustache. What could it be? Yes!—no!—yes! it was a glove—a primrose-coloured glove—the glove which she discovered, upon arriving in her dressing-room, she had missed.

Sydney Ruthven, Sydney Ruthven—that six and a quarter Jouvin is as a trump in thine hand, and is playing sad havoc with the heart of Mabel Delmington, of Healdon Hall.

Beauvoir Delmington père called upon Mr. Sydney Ruthven, at his dingy room, with a request that Mr. R. would, as his guest, favour him with as much of his company as would be consistent with his (Mr. R.'s) convenience. This was done delicately and well—just the true rose tint; and Mr. Bulliondust's secretary quietly set his ill-conditioned, crazy bark afloat, and went with the current. We suspect that Mabel was behind this invitation. We know that he accepted it in order to breathe the perfume of her presence.

A week rolled on, and still the contractor held to Healdon Hall. There was nothing stirring in the financial cauldron worth noticing. He required a holiday, and a holiday he would have. Another motive swayed him—the motive power a woman; that woman, Mabel Delmington. On dit, a cat may look at a queen; and this mouldy, disreputable, battered old Tom was purring, and mewing, and skipping about the throne upon which the Chatelaine of Healdon Hall was seated. Miss Delmington inherited

"money" in right of her mother—a Bradwynde of Bradwynde. This fact reached Mr. Bulliondust; and Mr. Bulliondust resolved upon annexing the "siller," and the young person attached to it. What cared he for the dragon guarding these golden apples? He had his "Open, Sesame!"—he had his sop ready, and one of the ingredients consisted of £2,000 entrusted to one of the porters in charge of the orchard gate. Yes, he had never been checkmated yet in any well-devised scheme, and he would win this coup to a dead certainty.

Somehow or other, Mabel Delmington was extremely agreeable to him, entering into conversation most readily; and whilst she treated Jephson and the others with the utmost indifference, she was always adorned with a gracious smile for him. But it so happened that the conversation generally led up to the topic of Mr. Sydney Ruthven. Mr. Bulliondust did not see this. How could he?

Poor Mabel, how perplexed and worried, and fascinated, and disgusted. Now with a blaze of love playing upon her pure heart like the lime-light upon the sparkling waters of the River of Happiness—vide bills, performed by Ess, Bokay, and Cie.; now in the profundity of despair and misery. Now despising the iron fetters of an accursed conventionality; now clinging like a drowning person to that raft upon that inland sea, surrounded by Society, called Caste. For two whole days she avoided Sydney Ruthven; nevertheless, she remained seated by the window, and saw his lithe and graceful figure crossing the lawn—always in the direction of the beech tree by the ruin. Then again, when she did encounter him, it was with a studied coldness that smote him in the teeth of his heart, and called upon his pride with a trumpet blast. Sunshine and shadow, tears and smiles, hopes and fears—*ay de mi!*

One afternoon the river, as usual, happened to be flowing towards the sea, and the beech tree happened to be standing by its banks, and a young lady happened to be seated beneath its shade, and a young gentleman happened to be reclining—well, not a hundred yards from her feet. But it also happened that another gentleman came that way at that particular moment, and this member of the male persuasion was Mr. John Bulliondust. He became purple from feelings of mingled astonishment and anger.

His sausage whiskers uncurled of their own accord, and each instantly distilled a drop of dyed marrow oil. His first impulse was to denounce his beggarly scrivener; the second, cautiously to retire, and work out the problem another way. The acquisition by his employé of the new and fashionable garments had been a sore puzzle to him. He did not like to make inquiries, lest he should be told that, in obedience to his wish, Mr. Ruthven had obtained them upon tick, with a view to presenting a creditable appearance in his interests. Latterly, he felt inclined to imagine that they had been furtively won at billiards from Mr. Jephson, who was about the same height as his employé.

The audacity of this penniless scrivener, to dare to place himself on an equality with Miss Delmington, to dare to lie at her feet as though he were her affianced lover! (Here the whiskers distilled another drop a-piece of dyed marrow oil, and twisted like legs of mutton upon a spit.) This should be kicked over at once, and he was the man to do it.

And he did it.

The evening was extremely sultry, and it was proposed that the gentlemen should sip their claret upon the terrace overlooking the river. The proposition was carried unanimously, and the bottles, with their impedimenta, were accordingly removed into the open air. Sydney Ruthven had not attended dinner—pleading a botanizing expedition, and uncertainty of return. Mr. Bulliondust had been drinking pretty freely, and was in a mood for any enterprise, from taking a contract for £250,000 to thrashing a bumptious overseer. He was about to raise a quarter-pint beaker of Château Lafitte to his lips, when he perceived Miss Delmington proceeding alone in the direction of the river. The opportunity was too good to be permitted to be lost; and, pleading a clumsy excuse, he quitted the party on the terrace, and followed her. He would let her know what sort of a person she was permitting to kiss the hem of her garment. He would tell her his wage, and how he got him in reply to an advertisement. He would open her eyes with an awl. He would put her upon her guard. Having gained the path by the river, he proceeded in the direction in which she had disappeared, and—good Heaven! was his sense of vision mocking him? Not a bit of it. There

stood the heiress of Healdon Hall, and beside her—yes, too close by half—Mr. Sydney Ruthven!

As the infuriated bull rushes at the red flag of the matador, so did Mr. John Bulliondust dash towards his audacious scrivener.

"Go to your room, sir—get out of this!" he cried, hoarsely and savagely, when he arrived in front of the startled pair.

Sydney Ruthven stepped forward, and quietly asked to whom he was addressing himself. This was to gain time, in order to ascertain if Bulliondust was intoxicated.

"To you, sir—how dare you be walking with the young lady? You don't know your position, sir—your beggarly position; and I'll teach it to you, by heaven!"

Sydney Ruthven turned to Mabel.

"Miss Delmington," he said, "may I beg of you to walk towards the house, until I deal with this despicable cad?"

"Oh, let there be no quarrel!" cried the affrighted girl to Ruthven. "Mr. Bulliondust, I shall ask Mr. Ruthven to conduct me to the house, as he, at least, knows how to act like a gentleman in the presence of a lady."

And she was about taking the secretary's arm, when the contractor, foaming with passion, interposed—

"You shall not. I am your father's guest, and this puppy is my servant. You'll go with me; and you'll be thankful to me for this when I tell you who and what he is."

"Miss Delmington has honoured me by naming me as her escort, Mr. Bulliondust, and if you attempt to interpose I shall fling you into the ruin."

This was said with the utmost coolness, but the teeth were clenched, and every muscle playing up like whipcord. He offered Miss Delmington his arm, with a bow as though he were about to ice her at some entertainment in Mayfair, and striding past his discomfited employer, disappeared in the direction of the Hall, whither, with rage at his heart and vengeance in his soul, Mr. John Bulliondust followed him.

When the enraged contractor reached the terrace, he found Mr. Sydney Ruthven coolly smoking a cigar, as if nothing particular had happened.

Marching straight over to the table where sat Mr. Beauvoir Delmington père, Mr. Beauvoir Delmington fils, Captain Delmege, and Mr. Jephson, Mr. Bulliondust exclaimed, in fierce and angry tones—

"Mr. Delmington, I have to apologize, sir, for bringing that person under your roof-tree," pointing to Ruthven, who continued smoking. "I picked him out of the gutter, and he has presumed on my kindness to abuse your hospitality by making love—"

"You had better stop there," interposed Sydney Ruthven, in a voice which was in strange contrast with the softness of the summer's night.

"How dare you address me in that way, sir?" howled the contractor. "Shut up, sir! you are still my servant." Then, turning to the astonished group, he continued—"Yes, Mr. Bowvoy Delmington, I seen him lying at full length under the big beech tree—"

"Gentlemen, excuse me for one moment," cried Ruthven, as he bounded from the terrace wall, and disappeared in the direction of the ruins.

"Mr. Bulliondust, I am really at a loss to comprehend this. Be good enough to explain," said Mr. Delmington, in a dignified and somewhat haughty tone.

"This is a lark," whispered Jephson to Captain Delmege.

"I'm glad the impudent sweep is going to get it hot," replied the captain, not utterly displeased that the audacious full private who had set upon him with reference to the Balaclava charge was in the hands of the Philistines.

Mr. Bulliondust, only too happy in being afforded an opening, began at the beginning, and gradually led up to the recent encounter.

"I was just turning a bend of the ruin, when I came in sight of the big beech tree—"

"You may go on now," interrupted Mr. Sydney Ruthven, who at that particular juncture reappeared upon the terrace.

The secretary appeared as though he had been exercising pretty freely; in fact, he was quite "blown."

Mr. Bulliondust turned upon him—

"You are no longer in my service."

"Indeed."

"You are discharged. Pack up, and be off at once. I got you in the gutter, and—"

"Where I shall now plant you, you low, lying bully," cried Sydney Ruthven, springing at him, and producing from behind his back a freshly cut, formidable-looking stick.

"This is a twig from that beech tree you alluded to; see how you like it—"

And ere the contractor could recover his astonishment, he was being belaboured as was Mr. Wackford Squeers by Nicholas Nickleby, every cut causing the dyed whiskers to curl the wrong way on their own particular account. And although a powerful man, and, in his own way, a bruiser, he was, in the hands of his assailant, as helpless as a sack of flour, or Pantaloon under the pre-arranged, stereotyped buffets of the belligerent Clown. Nobody thought of interrupting. The whole thing only occupied the space of two minutes—one minute and three-quarters to a succession of well-directed and full-bodied whacks, the remaining quarter to hurling the eminent contractor into a grove of scarlet geraniums, where he lay in a position, to say the least of it, the very reverse of a classical one.

Strange fellow, Ruthven! Nothing would satisfy him but to thrash his employer with a branch of the identical tree beneath the shade of which he had inhaled so much of enervating happiness.

"Mr. Delmington and gentlemen, I must apologize for this pitiful exhibition of temper on my part, and —"

"You're a devilish fine fellow," interrupted Captain Delmege. "Give me your hand. That cad deserved all he got, and more."

Sydney Ruthven caught the 11.20 up train that night. Mabel witnessed the decline and fall of Bulliondust from her bower—(much better than bed-room window). Every blow set her heart a-beating.

Heigh-ho!

It is the month of November. A heavy fog hangs round Healdon Hall, and shadows thick and heavy as the fog are lying over the heart of its fair young mistress. She sits in a charming little boudoir, crouching over the fire, and gazing into its glowing depths with dreary eyes. She is thinking of Sydney Ruthven, of whom neither tale nor tidings has been heard since that memorable summer night, now three months ago, upon which he had castigated his singularly irritating employer. Mr. Bulliondust had shown, in addition to his business, a little of the cloven foot, consequent upon a fiery ebullition on the part of Delmington père with reference to his ideas upon the subject of his daughter's hand; and the contractor had acted vulgarly, not to say rudely, in consequence.

Day after day, Mabel fondly hoped for news of Ruthven—a flower, a token of some description or other. But, no—days, weeks, months passed away, and he gave no sign. What did it mean? Was he so base as to have trifled with her heart, as a child does with a cup and ball? And yet he made no profession of love; he exacted no promise; he demanded no pledge. There was no question of what the world calls love between them; but there was a link that never could be broken—that mystic tie which binds heart to heart, although no word may be uttered, no look. Ah, yes, looks are totally different, and in the matter of looking, of gazing with his pensive blue eyes down into her very soul, Master Sydney Ruthven had much to answer for.

"Oh, why did I ever meet him?" she moaned. "Why did I ever walk beside the river?" exclaimed Mabel Delmington, unromantically poking the fire as she uttered the words.

Beautiful young girls are only flesh and blood, and flesh and blood demand good fires in November, even though the coals are forty-five shillings per ton.

"Mr. Percy Stonleigh," is announced by a servant, throwing open the drawing-room door.

The fire is very bright, and casts its full light upon the person entering the apartment.

Mabel, not knowing the name, looks up herself. Good heavens! Sydney Ruthven stands before her.

Now we shall call him by his real name and none other—and Percy Stonleigh rushes across the room in time to catch her fainting form; and it was just as well that he did, or her head would have come into violent contact with the coalscuttle.

Now to unveil the mystery.

Percy Stonleigh was a giddy, reckless youth, who was always spending money, and whose career was marked by a special desire to get rid of it at any risk and at any price. He succeeded à merveille; and not only was he surprisingly successful in disposing of his own available resources, but he also succeeded in bringing almost to beggary his uncle, Sir Geoffrey Stonleigh, who permitted Master Percy to draw and draw, and draw again, upon him, without calculating the amount of outgo; until, one fine

summer's morning, after paying his graceless nephew's losses upon the Goodwood, he found himself, to use his own phrase, "bottled by the dozen." He never said a harsh word—he merely sighed; and this sigh told Percy Stonleigh, as plainly as the writing upon the wall, that he had been weighed in the balance and found wanting, and that the sooner he blotted himself out the better. He enlisted in the 11th Hussars, under an assumed name, and rode in the Ride of Death.

Although the iron had entered his soul, he could not prevail upon any of the Russian material to enter his body, or head either, and came through without a scratch.

One day to his astonishment he learned that he had been bought out, and, furthermore, with feelings of ecstatic pleasure, that Sir Geoffrey had fallen upon joyous days. A cousin, General Pierrepont Stonleigh, who had "looted so infernally, by gad!" in India, returned to England to find the head of the house without a house at all, and forthwith repurchased the ancestral seat; and having done this meritorious act, and having made his will, retired to another, and it is to be devoutly hoped a better, world. Sir Geoffrey sent for the prodigal, but that gentleman refused to return—

"I am not yet purified, Sir Geoffrey," he wrote.

"What the deuce do you mean?" writes Sir Geoffrey.

"I mean this—that I shall work for my living at the meanest drudgery until I shall have expiated my miserable, accursed folly. I change my name, and no man shall know who or what I am for two years from this day. I shall occasionally send you a newspaper, to let you know that I am alive and in earnest."

In accordance with this virtuous resolution, Mr. Percy Stonleigh changed his name to Sydney Ruthven, replied to Mr. Bullion-dust's advertisement, was lucky enough to obtain the situation, paid off out of his wretched salary those debts of honour, and ended by—but the story has told itself.

Poor Sir Geoffrey died suddenly, and his Anglo-Indian fortune came to his nephew, who only learned his demise through the columns of the *Times*. True to his word, Percy Stonleigh drudged until the last day of the two years had expired. Then he claimed his rights, and then—

Well, he came to Healdon Hall, and claimed Mabel Delmington; and she did not say him nay.

THE END.

THE CASUAL OBSERVER.

AT HURLINGHAM.

AT Hurlingham—that pleasant clubhouse, with green lawns sloping down to the river, dotted with flower beds in all the gorgeous glories of ribbon gardening, with cloying scented shrubs and drooping cedars, the crème de la crème of fashion constantly arriving to lend colour to the shady alleys, and pass on in a stream to the shooting ground, a large field surrounded by a high boarded fence, with an awning here, a refreshment stall there, and a roped-off space sprinkled with chairs for those who come to gaze upon the fashionable sport. You have not seen pigeon-shooting à la mode? Listen then, it is done in this wise.

On the right we have the band of the Royal Horse Guards Blue, on the left the band of the Scots Fusiliers; behind us is an awning, beneath which stands a perfect armoury of double-barrelled guns, with a few gloomy individuals to bear them to and fro and load.

In front we have a small awning-covered table, on which is placed the silver cup for competition, and by which are seated the scorers and the person who attends to the traps—five square green boxes placed at a distance of thirty yards in advance, and so arranged that when our friend here pulls a string, one of the five boxes or traps falls to pieces like a pantomime trick, setting at liberty a pigeon supposed to be a wild, blue rock, chosen for the swiftness of its swallow-like flight; then away with a rush darts the bird.

The match is in full progress, and the Peers and the Commoners fire alternately. A voice from the table calls out, "The Prince of Wales's gun," and from out of the crowd the Heir-Apparent, in a grey felt hat, grey morning coat, and light grey trousers, steps to the peg, thirty yards from the traps, gun in hand.

There arises a buzzing from the left, where members who bet are congregated, and voices are heard rapidly offering or taking odds; while here, by the tented table, there is a brief colloquy, as the actor for the time being covers the traps with his gun.

"Are you ready?"

"Yes!"

"Pull!"

A trap to the left falls to pieces; up darts a frightened bird—"Crack!"—one barrel—"Crack!"—second barrel; a thin cloud of smoke, beyond which, with rapid wing, the pigeon is cleaving the air, and rejoicing in its liberty.

"Mr. Vivian's gun."

That gentleman steps out in turn to represent the Commons; and, in the meantime, from a small mountain of flat baskets, from one of which he has abstracted a fresh pigeon, out runs a soiled individual in shirt-sleeves, builds up the fallen trap, and primes it with a fresh pigeon.

The brief colloquy takes place again; there is the sharp betting; down fall the sides of the trap; away flies the pigeon—"Crack!"—the bird gives a spasmodic spring, and falls motionless on the turf—falls more swiftly than the little cloud of feathers that float down after it, as if to form its pall.

But there is no lying in state for pigeon, unless it be beneath a future pall of pie-crust; for now a fresh actor appears on the scene—about as weird or diabolical a dog as can run across a field—black, clipped as to hair, save a lion-like tip left at his tail end, ragged of ear, and with his jaws clogged with blood and feathers. His task is to pick up the birds. But see him now that this peer—a marquis—has fired in his turn.

The bird is what a gentleman in the company terms a "plucky one:" the poor, stupid thing is not content to die in fashionable society, to the strains of operatic music, and watched by the bright eyes of the British aristocracy—it prefers life and the green trees beyond the bounds; and when it has received the contents of two barrels—Eley's best central-fire cartridges, of course—it circles in a wild, giddy flight for a few moments, and then falls, bleeding and quivering, upon the grass.

Out runs the Mephistophiles-like dog, not in a bold, canine fashion, but with slow, cunning approach. Pigeon, weak and bleeding, sees fresh danger, and makes another struggle for life—flits a couple of yards, falls, flits again and falls, this time into a pair of ugly, steel trap jaws, and the dove's game of life is played out.

To and fro run the men to prime the traps, and now another peer takes his place:

fires—misses—fires again; there is a fine cloud of feathers dashed out of the pigeon's side, and still it sweeps on; but suddenly it makes a dart up, and falls, ready for the dog to bear it to the basket. A well-known member of Parliament has next the turn, kills with the first barrel, and is applauded; but, all the same, he comes back slouching of gait, and with the look upon him of one who has just committed a bird-murder.

And now a well-dressed, good-looking young man steps out, and takes his place, bringing down his bird now and then; and people say that the Duke of Edinburgh is a better shot than his brother.

There are some two hundred pigeons to be slain, so there is time to look round, though we pause to see that poor tailless dove, when the trap falls, helplessly staring, till it is scared up by the throwing of an India-rubber ball.

There is something else Indian here, though: the Nawab of Bengal and his sons are gazing with a placid wonder at the way in which we English indulge in sport. The conversation is rapid on all sides, and is not all pigeon-tinged.

We get, too, a proof that the many ladies present are not all here from choice.

"Allow me to make room for you—you can see better here," says a gentleman to a lady with a charmingly intellectual countenance.

"No, thank you, I would very much rather not look!" is the reply.

And she escapes seeing the frantic struggles of a soft-eyed, iridescent-necked dove to evade the fangs of the black dog coming towards it with its crouching slink. The death wound has been dealt, it knows not from whence, and in its agony it has flown towards the firing stand; but its struggles are in vain, and that crunch is merciful, after all. But all the ladies were not so humane.

More music—more fashionable company—the lanes completely packed with London's most dashing equipages; James Plush in excelsis; and still the blank palings repeats the reports of the double guns, and the shots patter a deadly hail in the green foliage of the trees. "Crack—crack!" a pair of merciful shots, for the bird is off and away.

Green trees ahead: hurran for liberty! He may "coo" again in some pleasant breeding season, for he has dashed right

into that tree. It was the last flight, though; for the shot was fatal, and the bird falls rattling through the branches to the ground.

By the traps the grass is covered with shot and feathers before the match is over; and we leave, pondering upon sport, and comparing a breezy tramp over a northern moor with shooting tailless, prison-cramped pigeons from a trap, to the strains of a military band.

ANGUISH IN PRINT.

IN THE STRICTEST CONFIDENCE.

TEAR THE TWENTY-FIRST.

AN APPARITION.

BED-TIME at last, and me there, shut up in our own room; but not before I had run to the end of the passage and tried the end door to see if it was open; and it was—it was! Clara was, after all said and done, nearly as much excited as poor I; while once she sighed, and said that she could almost have wished for the poor Signor to have been there, but I did not tell her I was very glad that he would not be. Then Miss Patty must want to know what we were whispering about, and declare that she would tell Miss Furness, for we were making fun of her; and turn huffy and cross, till she got into bed, and then lie staring with wide-open eyes at the window, just because we wanted her to go to sleep.

"Ma's going to send me a cake on Toosday," she said at last, after I had kissed and told her we were not laughing at her; and I must do her the credit of saying that she always was a most good-tempered creature, and never out of humour for long together. "And when my cake comes," she continued, after five minutes' thought, "I'll spend fourpence in ginger beer, if you will each spend the same, and we'll have a supper."

"I do wish you would go to sleep, instead of keeping on bothering," said Clara.

"I dare say you do, Miss Consequence," said Patty; "and I shall go to sleep when I like."

And then, if she did not lie awake until nearly twelve, till we pretended to be both fast asleep, and would not answer any of her foolish, chattering questions, when, as usual, she began to snore; and after waiting until I felt quite sure that she was asleep,

I jumped out of bed, and began to dress myself as quickly and quietly as possible, when, as soon as I had finished and lain down once more, Clara got up too, and followed my example, even to the lying down again when she had finished; for it was too soon to go yet, and we both felt that it would be safer the nearer we were to the middle of the night; while of course one felt determined to do nothing this time to frustrate one's designs.

We had tried more than once dressing in bed under the clothes, and, of course, lying down; but that really is such terribly hard work, as any one will find upon trying it, that we both soon gave it up, and waited till we felt sure of Patty being sound asleep; and she really was the heaviest sleeper I ever knew. And then we dressed in the dark; and that is bad enough, I can assure you—dreadfully awkward, for one gets one's strings so crossed, and tied wrong, and in knots, and muddled about, till one is horribly uncomfortable, besides being twice as long as at any other time.

At last, I whispered to Clara that it was time to go, but there was no answer; and on getting off the bed and touching her, she quite started. For she had been asleep, and when I reproached her—

"Well, of course," she said, peevishly; "it's sleeping time, is it not?"

But she roused up directly after, and stood by my side, while I went down upon my knees by the bottom drawer, and tried to pull it out very gently, without making any noise, so as to get at the cord. For the key was in it all right when I came up, and I thought that I would leave it there, though I was all in a fidget for fear any one had been in and looked and seen the cord, while Patty was so curious that I dare not look to see; though if any one had taken it away, what should I have done?

"Cree-ea-ea-ea-eak," went the drawer as soon as I pulled it, after the lock had shot back with a noise like a small pistol; while at this dreadful sound I stopped and turned cold all down my back; for I felt sure that the Fraulein would hear it. So there I knelt upon the floor, trembling like a leaf, and not daring to move; for Clara cried "Hush!" very loudly, and I'm sure I did not know what would come next. In fact, I almost expected to see the bed-room door open, and the Fraulein standing there.

"You should have put some soap upon it," exclaimed Clara.

"Yes, same as you did upon the basin," I said, viciously, and that silenced her; though I believe the mischievous thing was chuckling to herself all the while.

At last, after five minutes had passed, which seemed like as many hours, everything was quite still, so I gave the drawer another pull.

"Craw-aw-aw-aw-awk," it went, louder than before, and as if on purpose to annoy me; but I was so desperate that I gave the thing a horrible snatch, and pulled it out far enough, when I pushed in my hand and drew out the cord, hardly expecting to find it; but there it was, all right, and holding it tightly, I still knelt there trembling.

"Er-tchisher—er-tchisher," came now, as loudly as possible, from Patty Smith's bed; and then we heard the tiresome thing turn on one side.

We waited a little, and then I rose, and stood close to the door, waiting for Clara to join me; when if the stupid thing did not forget all about my open drawer, which I dare not attempt to close, and went blundering over it, making such a dreadful noise, that I rushed into bed and covered myself up; while, from the scuffling noise, I knew that she had done the same, for it was too dark to see.

"Oh, my shins!" said Clara, in a whisper.

And then I could hear her rubbing and laughing, not that I could see anything to laugh at; while if the Fraulein did not tap at the wall because we were so noisy, and with disappointment gnawing me, I knew that we must not stir for at least another half-hour, when it was quite late enough as it was.

"Oh, what a comfort it is that Patty is such a sleeper!" I thought to myself. And there I lay—wait, wait, wait, until I felt that we dared move, when I again cautiously slipped to the door, and, as I had taken the precaution of rubbing it well with pomatum, the lock went easy. Clara joined me, and then, drawing the door after us, we glided along the passage, hand in hand, listening at every step until we reached the end, where the room door was ajar, just as I had left it when we came up to bed. Then we slipped in so quietly that we hardly heard ourselves, and, pushing to the door, I tried to fasten it, but it would not fasten without making a

noise; so, as we were right away from the other rooms, I left it, and went across and tried the window.

The hasp went rather hard, but I soon had it gliding up; and then I stood looking out into the dark night, and listening, till I heard a little soft cough from below, which I answered; when my heart began to beat very fast, for I knew that, after all, we were not too late, and he was there.

But there was no time to lose, and, as fast as I could, I undid the nasty tangley cord, which would keep getting itself in knots, and rustling about upon the floor, like a great, long, coiling snake. But I managed at last to have it hanging down, and began fishing about, like I used at Teddington, with papa, till I got a bite; for, after a bit, I felt it softly tugged at—just like the eels under the fishing line—then it went jig, jig, two or three times, as it was shaken about, and then there was a long jerk, and a soft cough, as if for a signal; and I began to pull up something which grew heavier every moment.

It seemed very long, and I could have fancied that I had pulled all the cord in twice over; but more still kept coming, and I must have had it all close to the window, when Clara suddenly cried "Oh!" when, of course, I started and let go, and down it all went with a rush in amongst the carnations at the bottom.

"Oh, his poor head!" I thought, as I turned sharply round; when, what a job I did have to keep from shrieking!—for there, dimly seen in the open doorway, stood a figure in white, staring at us in the most dreadful way imaginable. There was something so still, and tall, and ghastly about the figure, seen there in the glamour, that I could not stir, neither could poor Clara, when we held tightly by one another as the thing glided softly into the room, closed the door, and stood there staring.

If I could only have sunk through the floor, I would not have cared. One moment I thought of rushing into one of the empty beds in the room; but I restrained myself, because there were no clothes upon them in which to bury oneself. The next moment I was for jumping out of the window to Achilles; but it was too far; while we neither of us dared to go into hysterics and scream for help. So that we stood, frightened to death, till Clara sank down at my feet, and buried her face in my hands,



while I stood staring at the figure, which now came closer and closer as I walked away, Clara shuffling upon her knees to keep up to me.

For a moment I thought that it might have been a teacher *en déshabille*; but the horrible silence soon showed that it was not. And at last, when I felt that I could bear no more, but must scream, having been walked right up to the wall by the hideous thing, it spoke, and the words seemed to act upon us both like magic, sending the blood coursing through our veins, making our hearts throb, and a warm glow to return where a moment before all was frozen and chilling; for just as I was sinking—feeling myself gliding slowly down upon kneeling Clara—the figure spoke, and I started up, for it said, in a loud, thrilling whisper—

“What are you two adoin’ of?”

And then it sneezed.

When, of course, it was Patty Smith, who had pretended to be asleep, and watched all the time, following us along the passage, and thoroughly upsetting all one's plans again. She could see plainly enough that we had the window open, and knew pretty well what was taking place; so we had to make a virtue of necessity, and tell her, in as few words as possible, all about it. Not that I think she would have told tales, even if we had not enlightened her; but we knew she would watch us, and find out for herself; so, upon the principle of its being better to make a friend than an enemy, she was told all.

“Won't you make your cold worse, dear?” said Clara. “You are not dressed.”

“I don't care,” said the stupid thing; and then she stopped, while I went to the window again; and though I had lost my string, and knew that it was of no use to try any more that night, I gave a gentle cough and then waited a moment, and was about to cough again, but Patty, who was close behind me, sneezed once more so loudly; and at last, after waiting a few minutes and coughing again and again, Clara and Patty both grumbled so about the cold that I was obliged reluctantly to close the window. And then, after waiting for awhile, we one by one stole back to the bed-room, where Patty declared that it was such good fun, and that she would go with us next time—just as if we wanted her; while poor I laid my cheek upon my pillow, disappointed,

disconsolate, and upset to such a degree that I could do nothing else but have a good quiet cry, for I don't know how long; but I know how wet my pillow grew, so that at last I was obliged to turn it before I could get to sleep.

And what was the use of going to sleep, to be in such trouble that I did not know what to do—dreams, dreams, dreams, and all of such a horrible kind! Now it was Achille in danger, now it was the white figure coming in at the door; and one moment Patty Smith, and then changing into Mrs. Blunt and Miss Furness, Miss Sloman and the Fraulein; while, last of all, if it was not mamma, looking dreadfully cross, and then scolding me for my bad behaviour. Oh, it was terrible! And I don't think that I ever before passed such a night.

A HOLIDAY IN THE NORTH.

IV.

THE next morning we found ourselves, with the weather still propitious, off Dyrholaey or Portland, the most southern point of Iceland—a curious headland, running out into the sea, pierced by a natural archway, of perfect shape and considerable size. Close to this place, too, we saw some curious rocks standing up out of the water, called Reynisdrangar, which, according to a legend, are a ship with two giants in pursuit of it turned into stone; but which look much more like the fangs of a gigantic tooth. Above these, Myrdals Jökull and Eyjafjalla Jökull joined in one vast field of snow, with tremendous glaciers winding seawards, of which we counted ten in sight at once; and when we had gone a little farther, we saw, up a valley to the north-east, columns of steam rising from several small geysers, which seemed to take it in turn to work off their superfluous vigour, as ~~one~~ would seem to die away and be immediately succeeded by another, which would presently give way to a third, and so on, until they began again. Our attention was now also attracted by the large number of whales which commenced spouting on all sides of us, and created great excitement. We never passed at all near one, however; and were obliged to content ourselves with the spouting, and occasional glimpses through a glass of the huge black mass, as it rolled out of the water.

Soon after passing Portland, we sighted the little group of the Vestmanna Islands, at which we were to stop just long enough to set down the Sysselman, or chief magistrate, and deposit the mails. These islands are a small, scattered group of very rocky, volcanic islands, some twelve or fourteen miles from the mainland. They are particularly picturesque, from their precipitous sides and green summits—the chief island, Heimaey, being apparently the crater of an extinct volcano. As we left the little bay where we had stopped, and steamed between the islands of Heimaey and Bjarnarey, a gun was fired from the bows, which produced a splendid echo, and simultaneously, clouds of birds rose from the cliffs into the air, and wheeled about in every direction. Their number was perfectly marvellous; for while the cloud overhead resembled a swarm of gnats in England, the cliffs were still quite white with the birds which had not risen, and which we could see, through our glasses, sitting comfortably in rows on the ledges of the rock.

Just at this time we met with our first, and I think I may say our last, disappointment; and even this was not a very serious one. Hitherto, famous Hekla had been hidden from us by the snows of the Eyjafjalla Jökull, but it now came gradually in sight as we got farther and farther west. We had been expecting an imposing and magnificent sight. Nothing of the kind. What we saw was a rather flat, black, sinister-looking cone, streaked here and there with snow. No smoke was issuing from the crater; and, except in shape, it was not at all the orthodox idea of a volcano.

The coast now got more and more barren; the mountains disappeared, and it was quite a disputed point whether any green was visible. All agreed, however, that anything more barren it was impossible for man to conceive. As the evening drew on, the seabirds either settled on the water or flew away landwards, reminding one forcibly of the lines—

“As, darkly painted on the crimson sky,
Thy figure floats along.”

We were off the south-western promontory of Iceland, terminating in Cape Reykjanes, which stood up as black as coal against the brilliant sunset colours, in all its jagged wildness. The sea was as smooth as glass. Right ahead of us was a small fish-

ing boat, lying between the cape and the rock called the Mealsack. Sky and sea on the right were alike brilliant crimson, the sun having just set, divided by the black, saw-like line of coast, with here and there a belated puffin flapping lazily along, and all looking warm and lovely. Turning to the left, or south, what a contrast! The sea a very pale blue—such as I have seen in some sketch of Elijah Walton's—shading off into equally pale blue sky, so that one can scarcely perceive the difference; while a three-quarters moon hangs close above the horizon. On this side, too, the view is very beautiful; but all cold as death. But it is nearly midnight, and we must turn into our berths, for the last time on our voyage out.

The next morning, we were at anchor, with Reykjairk before us. We were lying in a broad bay, with but a slight curve in the shore line, along which the scattered capital of Iceland has grown up. Its appearance from the sea is not prepossessing, as little is to be seen but a number of large wooden warehouses, with three or four long jetties running down into the water at intervals. On either side the town, the land is low and bare; but farther up the fiord were swelling hills, while opposite the town, on the north-east, the purple mountains of the Esja rose, grand and picturesque; and on the other side there peeped up here and there, far away, some volcanic peaks and cones of distant blue. On the north-west, if the weather had been clear, we should have seen in the far distance, across the Faxe Fiord, a line of lofty mountains, ending in the snow-clad Snaefells Jökull; but though there was a bright, hot sun overhead, the horizon was cloudy, and we were not favoured with the sixty miles view required.

We had some time before written to Mr. Zoëga, of Reykjairk, to procure us horses for our trips into the interior, and we found him ready to supply us with these, as well as a guide and tent. It was, however, impossible to get off that day; and after depositing our baggage at Mr. Zoëga's house, and making all the necessary arrangements for a start the next morning, we strolled out to see the town. This is a straggling affair, consisting of two streets running parallel to the shore, and three or four others at right angles; the houses being all built of wood, now and then with painted fronts, and the three other sides tarred. As a rule, they

have but one storey; and the windows being flush with the sides of the houses, instead of receding, gives them a rather cold look, and shows the thinness of the walls. Altogether, the impression conveyed to our minds by first appearances was that of a new town in some far-off colony, where the houses have just been knocked together temporarily, until time and materials allow of more substantial building. At either end of the town was an irregular collection of turf huts, and in the rear a stagnant-looking and weedy lake.

Many of the houses had small gardens attached to them; but, as far as we could see, they did not seem able to raise much in them. Although the outsides of the houses looked so bare and uninviting, we could see by occasional glimpses of interiors as we walked along the streets, and we soon found out by experience, that the Icelanders—like other people—know exceedingly well how to make themselves comfortable indoors.

The cathedral at Reykjaik, and the church at Holar, are said to be the only two stone buildings in Iceland; and so, perhaps, they are, if lava be not considered stone. But we noticed two or three houses built of this last material, and, at a short distance from the town, a prison, I believe, was also being built of lava. Besides these, the only buildings worthy of note are the governor's house, the college, and the hospital; which last mentioned institution is put to a variety of uses, visitors being accommodated with lodgings there, in the absence of a hotel; and we heard that on the following evening the governor was to give a grand ball in the same building, in honour of the officers of a French frigate which was lying in the bay.

After making a few small purchases, including so-called mosquito nets, which we were told it would be an advantage to possess, we wandered out of the town, and after a delicious bathe from the broad, flat tops of some basaltic columns, which projected some three feet from the water, we made our way along the lava-sanded shore, to the hot spring from which Reykjaik takes its name. It lies in the midst of a barren wilderness of mossy tufts, some distance from the town, and is discovered from a great distance by the clouds of white steam which rise from it. We found several women engaged in washing clothes at the

spring, which was very hot, and whose steam smelt slightly of sulphur.

After a three o'clock dinner at Reykjaik, we mounted some horses (they are really ponies; but, being the sole representatives of the equine race in the country, they are dignified with the title of horses), and rode off, at the invitation of a Danish merchant, Mr. Thomsen, to see the salmon taken from the traps in his river, some four miles from Reykjaik. As we had heard many stories of the peculiarities and vices of the Icelandic horses, we were not entirely without misgivings, and maintained a foot's pace until we were clear of the town; but on emerging into the open country, we gradually got faster and gained confidence. This was somewhat shaken, however, by an incident which occurred as we breasted the first hill. The road here consists of a causeway, of sufficient width to allow three to ride abreast, made of lava pebbles and dust, and edged with blocks of the same material; and, as we neared the bottom of one hill, we heard sounds of galloping, and immediately there appeared on the crest of the hill opposite a horse and rider coming at a furious pace, which rapidly increased as they descended the somewhat steep slope. The horse swung violently from side to side of the causeway, till it seemed as though it must fly off altogether; and the motions of the rider corresponded with those of his steed, with the addition of this fact, that his legs, swinging at every stride like a couple of loose sandbags, and coming down again with considerable force, urged the horse on to still more violent exertions.

As this awful apparition came nearer, we glanced round for some way of escape. To turn and fly would be useless, for we should be overtaken and run down at once. To leave the road at this point was equally out of the question, as it was raised some four feet above the surrounding country; and below us was a chaotic mass of broken blocks of lava, of all shapes and sizes. There was nothing for it but to face the danger; and all drawing as much to one side of the road as possible, we stood our ground in fear and trembling. In another moment he had swept by like a whirlwind, there was a revulsion of feeling, and we all burst out into loud laughter, and resumed our way. At the time we were under the impression that the man was being run away with; but we subsequently discovered that this was the

usual mode of riding among the Icelanders whenever the exigencies of the path will allow of it.

After riding through some four miles of bare, dry, lava-strewn country, we reached the Laxå, where we dismounted, and throwing the bridles over our horses' heads, left them to graze while we went to take the salmon from the boxes. These are made with an opening down stream, like an eel trap; so that the salmon, working their way up from the sea, leap into them, but cannot get out again. On opening the lid of the first box (which was secured with a padlock), we could see several salmon with their noses close against the bars up stream. A huge landing net was brought into requisition, and plunged into the box. At first there was no difficulty in securing the fish, two, and even three, sometimes coming up together; but as they got fewer it was more difficult to catch them, and the last one was chased round and round the box for two or three minutes before he was safely landed. Out of this trap we took thirty-seven salmon, of various sizes, averaging nine or ten pounds each. We visited two other boxes, but only found one large trout; and then, remounting our horses, we crossed the river to a farmhouse, or boer, on the other side, belonging to Mr. Thomsen, where we tied the ponies up to some palings (as we were now in the farm enclosure, or tun, where it would not do to allow them to run loose), and lay on the grass, enjoying the evening lights on the Esja, and over Faxe Fiord, while the farmer regaled us upon rum and milk. A sharp ride brought us back to Reykjaik about eight o'clock; and after supper, and further strolling, chatting, and arranging, we rowed on board the *Diana*, and took possession of our berths for another night, in spite of the steward, who strongly objected to the arrangement.

ONLY A YEAR.

CHAPTER XVII.

"THYRLE, DO YOU KNOW WHAT YOU ARE DOING?"

IT was Christmas Eve, and Archer Thyrle was passing over the drawbridge from the gate in Calais towards the sea, when his eyes were suddenly arrested by the sight of a man. He was crouching against a wall,

and seemed to be weak or ill; his face was hidden in his hands; his dress that of a beggar, ragged and dirty; his attitude one of utter despair. It was the sight of his hands which attracted Thyrle's attention. In spite of the worn, dusty boots, the old ragged coat and trousers, the uncovered, dishevelled hair, the hands which hid his face were those of a gentleman. There was no mistaking blue blood in their slender outline and their tapered fingers.

Thyrle stood still.

"My good friend," he said in French, "are you in distress? Can I serve you?"

The hands fell, and their eyes met.

"Hasson Grainger!" exclaimed Thyrle, recoiling.

The man attempted no reply; but the wan blue eyes closed, and his little strength gave way. He silently fell at the feet of his enemy.

While Thyrle looked in dismay at the worn, haggard, famished face, a little crowd collected, and he gave orders for the poor man to be conveyed to his hotel.

Grainger recovered consciousness in a pleasant room, on an easy couch, and saw the man he had so bitterly hated anxiously awaiting his recovery. A doctor was in the room, and murmured some directions before he left. Then Thyrle approached the bed, and saw Grainger's eyes were open at last.

"Hasson, old fellow, are you coming round again?"

Grainger turned away his head. Was it possible—hardened sinner that he was, gambler, coward, forger, liar—that tears thronged his eyes at these words, simple, commonplace though they might be? He felt Thyrle's fingers on his pulse; then that, with a touch gentle as a woman's, he stroked back the hair from his damp forehead. Desperately he turned round, and looked up.

"Better, Hasson? The doctor said you would be by and by. Suppose you try a drop of this."

And he offered to the parched lips a refreshing draught, eagerly swallowed.

With the consciousness of Thyrle's quiet, watchful presence, Grainger fell into a sleep. It was late at night when he awoke; but by the light of a bright wood fire he saw the outline of Thyrle's figure, reading by a shaded lamp. He spoke in a low, choked voice—

"Archer!"

The book was closed, and Thyrlé came to his side with a glass of some strengthening cordial in his hand.

"You must drink this before you try to talk," he said, kindly.

Grainger obeyed. Then he turned his face to the light—a beautiful face still, even with the traces of sin and starvation so plainly to be read upon it.

"Thyrlé, do you know what you are doing?" he articulated.

"Well, I am trying to bring you all right again. You have been having rather hard times lately, I'm afraid, poor fellow."

Those slender, patrician fingers, which had so attracted Thyrlé's notice, clasped his hand convulsively.

"What is it that I want to recollect? I remember something about it. You are heaping coals of fire on my head—"

"My dear boy, don't talk nonsense." (Thyrlé's voice was hardly so steady as it was.) "Try to go to sleep again."

"Thyrlé!" with a wistful eagerness now, "you would not forgive me if you knew all. I don't know how to tell you."

"Leave it alone, then. It will keep, and I am not inquisitive."

He was leaving him, but the weak hand clung to the strong.

"Say you will forgive me, Thyrlé!"

"God knows I do. Whatever you have done, I am neither good enough nor bad enough to be able to refuse."

"You know what lies I told about you?" whispered Grainger.

"Yes; but you really had much better be quiet, and get some more sleep, Hasson."

"Directly. Do you know I committed forgery on you for six thousand pounds?"

"Yes."

"My God, and you let it pass! Archer, do you know I am dying?"

"No, I don't. The doctor said if you were kept quiet you would be nearly all right in a few weeks; so good night, old fellow, and don't trouble your head about trifles."

"Listen—one other thing."

His voice was faint and far away now, and Thyrlé administered another dose of cordial, and insisted on silence.

"I cannot sleep unless I tell you this," besought Grainger, after a short pause. "If I die—go to my lodgings in London—21, Norfolk-street—and in an iron safe there, belonging to me—you must break it open—are some—things of yours."

Coward even to the last, he dared not say what "things."

"Very well; but you will be all right soon, if you will be plucky. You are a young fellow yet, you know, Hasson, and lots of go in you."

But the dark blue eyes rose wistfully to the earnest kind ones beside them.

"I have been starved to death," said Hasson Grainger. "I shall never recover; but I owe no less thanks to you for the help you sent me at first, and for what you have done for me now. It has been all my own fault. Grace, poor child, will be sorry; she and my mother were the only women who ever really loved me. You will—tell Grace about me? I will try to sleep now, Archer."

And he slept before long; but it was a sleep from which he never awoke.

It was strange that the last word Hasson Grainger ever spoke should have been the name, once so familiar, of the friend he had betrayed—of the man he had robbed and slandered, and a second time betrayed; that he should die with this man's hand in his grasp; his eyes forgiving, unreproachful—the last to meet his in this world. Strange that, of all men, it should be Archer Thyrlé whose gaze—regretful and tender, with something of the affection of old—was the last and only one on the wasted, fearful beauty of that once glorious face; his the last touch on that silky, chestnut hair; his to close those dark-fringed eyelids over the eyes which had been, not long ago, of such powerful beauty.

It was with thankfulness that Thyrlé remembered Hasson's mother was dead; and, with a shudder, he thought of the two fair girls at Akenhurst, and the ghastly tidings he would have to bear them.

After seeing his friend's remains interred in a quiet little cemetery, Thyrlé crossed to Dover, and arrived at the Charing-cross Hotel on the same day on which Gilfred Kyriel came there from Liverpool. They did not meet; for Gilfred went to Knollinghamshire by the first train, and Thyrlé was sitting in his room writing, and sending off advertisements to be put into the Knollinghamshire papers. But a few days after, while at breakfast with Phillis, Gilfred suddenly exclaimed—

"What an idiot! Did you see this, Phil? —'To be sold, on immediate possession, all the estate and woodlands belonging to Merresford, together with the mansion known as Merresford Hall, near Hallingford. Furni-

ture to be sold as it stands, extensive gardens, vineries, peach-houses, &c., &c. Excellent shooting on the estate. Two packs of foxhounds in the vicinity'—and so on. What a rum fellow that Thyrle must be! I'm sorry he's going. Just when he had got in with all the swells here so well, and made himself quite a name across country. Good fellow, too, as I have reason to know. What the deuce can he be about? What sort of a place does he want? He must be confoundedly hard to please. Queer start, isn't it, Phil?"

And she, hiding her blanched face behind the silver urn, and struggling for the breath which the great, terrible throb of her heart had deprived her of, succeeded in answering—she knew not how—

"Yes, very."

And Gilfred went on reading and crackling his paper, while Phillis's heart kept jerking in strange, unnatural bounds; until at length, in terror, she left the room, and went into the cold, frosty air to recover herself.

Gilfred went up to London, to look out for apartments or a small house for his mother and sister. One day, on his quest, he met Thyrle, face to face, in St. James's-street. They stopped, and shook hands—Thyrle expressing his surprise to see him when he thought him in Canada, and Gilfred, alluding to his mother's increased ill-health, explained his errand, adding—

"I think I am doomed not to come across any suitable house; and the Langham and those places, you know, are ruinous for any length of time."

Thyrle interrupted him—

"There's that house of mine in Grosvenor-square. How would it do? It is of no earthly use to me—seldom has been. A man and his wife—the butler and cook—have all the benefit of it. I should be so glad if Mrs. Kyriel would honour me by taking possession of it."

He would not listen to such a proposition as rent.

"The house is perfectly useless to me," he said.

So, after a long talk and a good deal of persuasion on Thyrle's part, Gilfred consented to accept a second favour from him with a good grace. Phillis would have refused it indignantly, if she could; but no course was possible for her save to acquiesce in silence. Her mother was gratified—she

had always so much liked Mr. Thyrle that it was a pleasure to her to accept kindness from him. So, on the 20th of January, Mrs. Kyriel and Phillis were established in the London house of Mr. Thyrle, Sir Anthony Froome calling almost daily to see his patient, who improved under his care—Mr. Thyrle, to Mrs. Kyriel's astonishment and distress, coming never.

CHAPTER XVIII.

"IT IS NOTHING TO ME."

IT seemed to Phillis like some strange freak of her imagination, and not real, sober earnest, to find herself in Thyrle's house—to see, wherever her eyes fell, things of his; to trace his tastes in the books in the library, in the pictures on the walls, and even in the quiet, harmonious colouring of the hangings and furniture of the rooms.

There was one little room on the ground floor, into which the sun shone pleasantly, which particularly attracted Phillis. Was it possible that there lingered there a faint remembrance of cigar smoke? But there were more decided signs of his former presence there than even that. There was a pipe-case, with a variety of old favourites ranged in it, over the chimneypiece; there was a handsome tiger-skin for a hearth-rug; there was a portrait of his favourite horse, "John Peel," which he had brought to London to be framed, and which was left here, forgotten; there was a small bookcase, in which many of the books were old and worn, and a few of them—childish ones—with "Archer Thyrle, from his papa," inscribed in them in a businesslike hand. There were a few school prizes among them; and in one—a volume of Macaulay's *Lays*—was written, in Thyrle's own hand, though more boyish than that which Phillis had seen in the one or two notes he had written to her mother, "From Hasson Grainger."

There was a curious, old-fashioned oak escritoire, and in the writing-case upon it some note paper bearing Thyrle's monogram. And Phillis, ashamed though she was that she was mean enough still to cherish an interest in Thyrle, or in things of his, used to come to that little room by stealth, and try to picture there the face which she knew could look hard and cruel as well as tender and true. He had meant to punish her, and he had done it well and thoroughly, could he but know; but she was

sure she had at least pride enough left to hide that she had suffered, even should she see him. And again and again had she rejoiced in her heart that she had never told her friends, as he had wished her to. She could not have lived to bear a second time the pity, and curiosity, and gossip which a second desertion of the Beauty would have caused at home. That at least had been spared her; but she could not guess how much she might have been spared had there been no secret about the matter from the first.

Phillis sat in the large, beautiful drawing-room one afternoon, about a week after their arrival. A pleasant scent of flowers, with which they were supplied every day, from whence did not appear, filled the room, and she was idly looking through some periodicals for something to amuse her mother with in the evening, when the butler brought up a card, and presently announced "Lady Dynesford."

A handsome old lady she was, not unlike her son. She explained that her town house was only a few doors from this one, and that she and her son and daughter were there at present.

"My son had the pleasure of knowing you and your family in Knollinghamshire, and so I took the earliest opportunity to call. I have heard so much of Miss Kyriel."

Phillis blushed deeply. Though having less to reproach herself with on Colonel Dynesford's account than on many others, yet she felt that the penetrating glance of the old lady, coupled as it was by the warmest hopes that they might soon become intimate, and be good neighbours, confused and troubled her.

"I am unable to go much into society, Lady Dynesford. We have come here solely on account of my mother's ill health, and I seldom leave her."

This met with the usual observations about one so young and beautiful being made a prisoner; and when Lady Dynesford took her leave, she was well satisfied that her son should have "chosen" so handsome and ladylike a girl, as fortune did not so much signify. She had come full of dread, fearing that Colonel Dynesford might have thrown his handkerchief without due consideration; but there was every sign of the highest "tone" in all Miss Kyriel's words and movements, and she felt she should be proud of her daughter-in-law.

After that day Phillis found, indeed, that there was no peace for the wicked. "Lady Dynesford," "Colonel Dynesford," "Miss Dynesford," "Lady Dynesford," "Miss Dynesford," "Colonel Dynesford," "Lady and Colonel Dynesford," "Miss and Colonel Dynesford"—these were the changes rung nearly every day, sometimes oftener, on Miss Kyriel's wearied ears. They insisted on being welcome, would be friendly; and to rebuff them was like trying to turn the east wind with a pair of bellows. The colonel certainly kept in the background, but his indefatigable allies reduced Phillis to a state bordering on distraction.

Invitations were poured upon Gilfred and herself. Sometimes it was impossible to refuse; at others she avoided the irksome necessity of dressing and smiling for people she only wished to be absent from, and the certainty of encountering Colonel Dynesford's unobtrusive attentions and anxious looks.

All this time she had never seen Thyrlé. He had never called or written. Once he had sent an exquisite edition of Tasso and a message to Mrs. Kyriel by Gilfred; but that was all.

"He is a queer fellow," said Gilfred, one evening when they happened to be all at home alone. "Just think what he told me to-day for the first time! He had come back from Akenhurst this morning, where he had been breaking the news."

"What news? Of Hasson?" exclaimed Phillis, with startled eyes.

"Yes, poor fellow, he is dead. It was well that Thyrlé came across him, even in the way he did. He found him somewhere in Calais, ill and destitute, and took him to his own hotel; but the poor fellow was too far gone, and died during the same night. It is very sad, how poor Hasson went to the bad! Thyrlé would not tell me much. He said he had put off going to Akenhurst as long as possible, and didn't seem to like talking about Hasson; but he told me they had been good friends once, and he was glad to do for him what little he could, though I know Hasson hated Thyrlé, and was always saying bitter things against him. I can't tell what the devil is up with Thyrlé, he is always playing écarté with Diston, the best player I know. Last night he lost something very like two or three hundred, I should say. I'm afraid there must be something wrong. He drank

enough brandy to make me as drunk as a fly, and it told on him no more than so much milk. But I am sorry about poor Hasson—he was only a year older than I am."

"Did you ask Mr. Thyrlé to dine here, Gilfred?" said Mrs. Kyriel.

"Yes, but he can't. He's going to Algeria on the tenth, I think; and said he had a lot of things to do."

The white face and unusual silence of Phillis that evening were accounted for easily. Poor girl! she had once been very fond of Hasson, and they had all been playmates ever since they could remember. But Gilfred's words had sent a keener pang through her heart than even the sad tidings about her first lover caused. Archer Thyrlé—well, it could be nothing to her; but was he not treading in the steps which had wrought poor Hasson's ruin? It was—it should be nothing to her. But she stole into that little downstairs room that night, and sobbed more bitterly than she had done for months. She still had a sort of pride in believing him more noble and high-minded than other men, however cruel, or even base, had been his conduct to her; and she could ill bear to have what was left of her god shattered and dethroned. And he was going to leave England again, too. Weary days would pass, when even his name would never be heard. Then she went to her room, deriding her own grief, and repeating her one bitter consolation—

"Why in the world need I distress myself, whatever he does, or wherever he goes? It is nothing to me."

DOGGREL.

By A Dog.

CHY-IKE, sir—see, sir;
If you'll listen to me, sir,
A few words I'd just like to say,
On the state of our race
In this horrible place,
And on being put out of the way.

It's not long ago
That you struck the first blow,
And had us all licensed and taxed;
And all poor helpless strays,
In those massacring days,
Big-bludgeoned, drug-poisoned, or axed.

Oh, who'd be a dog, sir,
Born blind in a fog, sir,
To be drowned, ere he winks, in a pail;
Or if to maturity
Left in security,
To find this a sorrowful vale?

He may be protected,
Perhaps vivisected,
Get Brown Institute on the brain;
Win old ladies' loves
Till his skin's fit for gloves,
And he comes to the end of his chain.

If honours one gets,
We're not all born pets,
Hounds, poodles, sharp pointers, or pugs;
And your mongrel gets kicks,
P'raps a necklace of bricks,
Or a dose, for his dinner, of drugs.

As if this warn't enough,
The last bit of stuff
'Gainst our fame, is a cry worse than all—
Oh, it's really too bad—
That we're most of us mad,
And the dog race declines to its fall.

It comes down like a cuss:
We're forbidden each 'bus;
An edict's gone forth from the "Yard,"
To run us all in,
P'raps without a whole skin,
And then—— Oh, sir, isn't it hard!

The archbobby orders—
And enlarge my borders
If I'll trust myself to a blue!
I was took up one time—
Ugh! chloride of lime!
That hole where they put us to stew!

They took ten to kill,
But a small reward bill
Saved this dog that time for a run;
But now this mad action,
This canine detraction,
Will end us as sure as a gun.

Tell Baroness Coutts,
These men are such brutes,
They'll wipe us right off of the earth.
With no "cave canem"
To please or to pain 'em,
P'raps people will find out our worth.

So here, cheek by jowl,
We give one long howl
To be heard from the lord to the cad;
We'll let you illtreat us,
Starve, kick us, or beat us,
But don't, please—oh, don't say we're mad!

TABLE TALK.

AS every one is aware, the front of St. Paul's has now been enclosed with a semicircle of massive red granite or porphyry posts. They are ungraceful in shape, but highly polished, and have a very good effect. Some people, however, cannot let well alone; and chains are being designed to join post to post. One may ask, what for? It would be to be told that it was necessary to complete the enclosure, when the fact is that these chains will be im-

mediately utilized as swings by all the dirty little children within the radius of a mile. The young ragamuffins from the neighbourhood of Barbican and Golden-lane will come down like flies and swarm upon them. Spiked? What difference will that make? Let the chains bristle with spikes, and they will be all the more attractive—the children glory in them, even as a jackass does in the thorniest of thistles. Spikes, indeed! Why, what cab or carriage boasting a chevaux-de-frise behind is not seized upon by the little monkeys? If there is anything they like better than spikes, it is the hooks called “tenter,” and that they love. It is a wise ordination of nature, that which makes children impale and rip themselves with spike and hook—a hardening arrangement which makes them better able to bear the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune in days to come. Good committee, or dean and chapter, chain not your posts, they will not run away.

HAS ROBUR, the great tea spirit, nothing to say respecting the way in which the body of which he is supposed to be the soul is sophisticated by the dealers before it reaches the pots of the great B. P.? In the investigations now taking place under the auspices of the parliamentary commission, we hear of the most peculiar additions to our cup. Perhaps the most innocent adulteration is that of taking used leaves from the family teapot, and drying them for new tea from the district of Sham Poo. This of course accounts for the eagerness with which parlour-maids save the contents of the teapot. The fiction with respect to leaves is that they are to be used with a broom for sweeping the carpets; the truth, that they are to be dried with cuttings of broom of another kind, and go with chemical sweepings into a lead-lined tea chest, about which some rampant grocer posts placards—“Try our new season's tea”!

AT THE MEETING, the other day, of the Metropolitan Asylums Board, attention was called by the manager of the Stockwell Hospital to the case of a young woman named Fox, who was sent up from Hastings in a railway carriage, she having the small-pox in so dreadful a manner that on her arrival in London it was noticed; and yet she continued her journey. On her arrival at the Willesden Junction, she was too ill to

proceed, and was then conveyed in an ambulance to the Stockwell Hospital. The managers considered the conduct of some one culpable in allowing so dreadful a disease to be spread in such a way, and recommended that the Local Government Board should take steps to ascertain who are the guilty parties, so that they may be prosecuted. The report was adopted. It seems a hard thing to say, but in many such cases as the above—it may not be so in this—the guilty parties are employers, and the invalids domestic servants. Granting that it is a heavy tax upon the head of a family, and a terrible visitation, still, taking a fair and just view of the matter, the servant is a part of a family while in employ; and though not legally bound to nurse and protect her in illness, still, humanly speaking, it is a duty that every civilized being, let alone Christian, should perform. If the invalid possess a home and prefer to go to it, well and good; if it be judged prudent to send her to a hospital, again well and good; but certainly the employer is the protector of the servant, and is bound in all charity to see that his sick one is in some way tended, and not allowed to wander helplessly through the land, if not to the peril of others, certainly to her own.

AT THE RISK of being called un-English, we must ask if it is necessary that our sports and pastimes should be dangerous to life and limb? It was but the other day a gallant young Guardsman lost his life riding at a steeplechase; now we have another reported as seriously injured, perhaps fatally, at a Polo match. This game of Polo, which though increasing in fashion can never be carried to any great extent, on account of its being a mounted pastime, is certainly about as dangerous an amusement as could have been designed. Blows are delivered in so reckless a fashion that even the ponies have to be bandaged for their protection; men are overthrown in a tangled struggle; ponies fall, and the grounded ones are frequently ridden over. Let us be athletic and daring as a nation, by all means; but surely we could achieve to this without cruelty to man and beast.

All Contributions are attentively considered, and unaccepted MSS. are returned on receipt of stamps for postage; but the Editor cannot hold himself responsible for any accidental loss. No unaccepted MSS. will be returned until a written application has been made for them.

ONCE A WEEK

NEW SERIES.

No. 340.

July 4, 1874.

Price 2d.

JACK'S SISTER; OR, WOMANLY PAST QUESTION.

CHAPTER XXXV.

"IT WAS NOT MY FAULT."



WITH the impulse of guilt discovered, of punishment beginning, the couple thus suddenly recalled to the reality of life started apart, rising to their feet like deer disturbed from woodland shelter by the step of the hunter tracking them to their death. And yet there was little air of destruction in the sweet face—like a pale, tall lily, folded in soft, black garments, and framed in golden corn—which looked down on them, wan with sorrowful pity, which gave place to a deep, burning blush: the blush of pure womanhood for erring woman's shame.

I could know no bitterer disgrace than for one of my daughters to call such a blush into a fellow sister's face.

Clifton had coloured, too—flushed scarlet to the roots of his hair; and his head was bent upon his breast, in utter, overwhelming humiliation. I think he would have given his life at that moment that it had been even Jack, the friend he had wronged, who had thus come upon his dallying, than Enid—the woman he had dared to love, and who had rejected him. Baby alone preserved her self-possession. Her face changed, indeed; but only to be set in a sullen, de-

fiant expression; and her lips moved with the one word, muttered in a bitterly petulant aside—

"Spy!"

Enid turned and spoke to her. The flush had faded from her cheek, leaving it white as snow beneath a winter moon; and her voice trembled a little through its perfect gentleness. She took no notice of Clifton—never looked at him. If he had not existed, she could not have appeared more perfectly unconscious of his presence; and this grave ignoring stung him more keenly than any reproaches.

"Baby," she said, looking the girl full in the eyes, with a sorrowful compassion which would have melted many a far more guilty woman, "I am sorry I startled you. I did not mean to come upon you unawares; but I knew you were on your way home, and I came to meet you. I thought you would like to have me to walk back with you."

Baby laughed—not pleasantly: a hard, mocking little laugh, which made the man who heard it start and stare at her. The glamour even now was departing from his eyes, as the innate vulgarity of the earl's granddaughter came out in bold relief against the young townswoman's considerate courtesy.

"I expect you came to see that I didn't run away en route," she said, pouting and twisting her hands pettishly. "You seemed to know very well where to find me; but perhaps you have followed us some way, and did not like to—startle me before. Yes, I will go back. I know what you mean; but I don't care, and I can't help it. It will be only for one night."

"Baby! for God's sake—" Clifton broke in, almost with a gasp.

He had no right to use her pet name before Enid, and felt his error as he saw a faint spot of colour flicker to her cheek; but it was not in the man's nature to stand still and hear his queen insulted.

Baby burst into passionate tears.

"I can't help it," she sobbed, stretching out her hands to him, stained red with the poppy petals—the poor, fallen flowers which strewed the grass like drops of blood beneath her feet. "It is not my fault that I love you. She has seen—she knows; though she pretends not to do so, till she has got me back in that dull house, with her and—Oh, Clifton! don't leave me to them! Tell her it was not my fault! Don't leave me!"

She was clinging to him—lovelier than ever in her tears and despair. Clifton looked down at her, half frightened at the suddenness with which his admiration was growing into disgust. To be otherwise than gentle to a woman was not, however, in his power; and the sense of kindred guilt gave gentleness an almost caressing accent now.

"Miss Leyburn will not think you in fault," he said, raising his eyes with difficulty for one glance at Enid's white face. "I alone am to blame, and I am ready to take all the consequences, whatever they may be. It does not admit of excuses—there are none for *me*; and it would only be an insult to offer them."

He was speaking to Enid rather than Baby; but though she bowed her head slightly, as in assent, she did not look at him. Baby still clung to his arm.

"You will not desert me," she whispered, pleadingly. "Not to him. I am so afraid."

And Clifton answered, with well repressed impatience—

"I will go to London to see him, and tell him all, this evening. You have nothing to be afraid of here."

"Baby," said Enid, conquering her repugnance to interfere, and taking the girl's hand persuasively, "it is getting late, and my aunt will be anxious. You will come with me now, will you not? There will be no cause to speak of this—this that has happened; but she is ill, it will make her worse if we are late. What have we done to you that you should be afraid of us?"

An angel could not have pleaded more winningly with the wilful girl: hardly the King of Angels, when he said—"Friend, wherefore art thou come? Judas, betrayest thou the Son of Man with a kiss?"

With an irresistible impulse of bitter shame and remorse, Clifton freed his arm from Baby's clinging hands, and covered his face with his own. He would have liked to kneel and ask Enid's forgiveness, but he did

not dare; and now for the first time she looked at him, as though a new fear had startled her.

"Break this gently to my brother, Mr. Gore," she said. "He is not patient; and he has loved her very dearly."

She did not wait for an answer; but took Baby's reluctant fingers in her gentle clasp, and led her away, sullen but unresisting, in the direction of home.

No word was spoken on the way. The girls walked side by side, close together, and at a moderate pace, as though nothing had happened to make this any different from any other evening stroll. The red sunset threw "warm gules" upon the river's breast, and cast their shadows, long and black as funeral heralds, in the path before them. The birds twittered drowsily in the hedgerows; and now and then a labourer, trudging home from work, touched his hat to the young lady from the Cedars, whose name was a household word in every poor hovel for five miles round. Did the most miserable among them cover such grief as was aching in her heart that pleasant summer's evening?

Baby was far less unhappy. On the whole, indeed, she did not feel at all dissatisfied at the conclusion of the day's affair. True, Enid had interrupted them at the very moment when the words she longed for seemed trembling on Clifton's lips—held in abeyance there only while those lips touched hers; and, with all the little force in her shallow nature, the young lady hated her quondam friend for so doing. Yet, after all, she reflected, men were very slippery creatures—as Maudé and Kitty had found out often enough already. Satisfied with a kiss, Clif might have rested there, and asked no more. This fish, so valuable in her eyes, had proved wonderfully unwilling to bite. Again and again she had tried to land him; and again and again he had slipped off the hook. Now, his fate was sealed. He could struggle no more. She had won the day when she said "I love him," and he had answered, "I am ready to take the consequences."

"Consequences," that meant marriage; and, though it was not pleasant to have had to force the ring into an admirer's hands, Baby felt confident that, once promised, it would be returned religiously to her own third finger. He would not desert her—she knew that—now that he saw her com-

promised and cast off for his sake. Gentle and free from blame as was Enid's tone, the other girl's native shrewdness told her that all but charity and compassion was dead for her with her sister that might have been. Would it be so with Jack too? Probably—if he were like Enid, and controlled by her influence; for unwillingly, even to herself, Baby began to feel a sort of awe of this girl, whom she had regarded as so soft and weak as hardly to require any trouble in deceiving. The very fact of the latter having had the moral courage to walk in between her and her lover, and take her away from him with hardly the exertion of a word—the sight of him, so proud, so bright and saucy usually, bowed almost to the ground, and hiding his face for very shame—woke a mild sort of fear in Miss Delamayne, for the pale girl whose low voice and sad, true eyes could work such a revolution. She almost hoped that she would be treated harshly; and yet she dreaded the harshness, even if, as she hoped, it bound him more securely to her side; and, with a view to warding it off, she began to whimper a little and shiver as they drew near home, and to clench up her small, white hands (the gloves were somewhere near the poppies, forgotten), murmuring that she was “so cold, so cold.”

Enid looked down at her, very gravely.

“We shall soon be there now,” she said.

“I am afraid you are not well.”

The evening was warm enough, but she too felt cold: her whole heart numbed under the chill hands of such a shock. Baby rubbed away a fretful tear, and whimpered more.

“I know you think me everything that is wretched and dreadful,” she mumbled; “but it's all very well for you, who are engaged to the man you wanted. I'm sure I don't know what he's like, and I dare say he's very nice; but if Clifton had ever dreamt of caring for you, I don't believe—though you are so much older than I, and all that—that you could have helped liking him better, and—and giving in.”

“All that” probably stood, in Miss Delamayne's vocabulary, for religious principles, honour, and so forth. It was an arrow shot at random; for the mere idea of Clifton caring for such a plain, colourless person as Enid Leyburn could never have occurred to Baby's shallow little brain, always filled to repletion with herself and her own

charms; but, none the less, it went straight home, as though winged by the most cunning archer, and rankled deep in a wound yet raw—a wound so hid away and ignored, that, till thus stung to life again, Enid hardly recognized it as adding poignancy to the bitterness of Clifton's fall. For him and his accomplice, and pre-eminently for Jack, her heart had wept tears of blood. Now she shuddered and shrank to find that those tears were not wholly vicarious, and to realize how near, how very near, to the gulf into which Baby had fallen her feet had all unwitting strayed. That she had escaped made no difference—gave her no self-gratulatory thoughts. Baby's words had shown her how nigh one another she—the elder, stronger, and better trained—had stood with her weak and childish sister; and to the consciousness of that humiliating truth she answered, speaking low and wistfully—

“Indeed, I do not think you everything that is wicked. I have no right to judge you, or any one. How do I know what strength God has given you to withstand this great temptation? And I know it must be great, or it could never have induced you to inflict this terrible grief and wrong upon my brother.”

“It was not my fault,” Baby muttered, trying to excuse herself against the gentleness which would not accuse; “and he won't care. He does not care for me like Clifton.”

For the first time, Enid lightened into indignation. Her eyes flashed, and her whole face glowed as if transfigured with noble wrath.

“Not care!” she repeated, in a tone which made Baby quake and shiver. “But I will not hear you talk of *him*. You are not worthy of his caring, and you know it.”

They had just entered within the iron gates; and, skirting the circular lawn, with its huge cedar, which gave a name to the house, were ascending the steps to the porch. Some one seemed to be watching for them; for, ere they reached the top, the hall door flew open, and in the centre of the arch of ruddy light appeared a tall man, with huge limbs and sunburnt face, striding out into the twilight to welcome them.

Jack had come home a day sooner than was expected.

It was not his fault that the first greeting was for Enid instead of his betrothed. His

eager look, his glad word of welcome, and outstretched hands were all for the latter; but, in a paroxysm of sheer physical fear, she shrank back, as if for protection, behind the girl who had rebuked her. And Enid flung her arms almost convulsively round her brother's neck, kissing him twice with sorrowful, passionate energy, as she cried—

"Jack, is it you? and home so soon!"

"If I be I, as I suppose I be," laughed Jack, kissing her good-naturedly before he turned to Baby. "And not unwelcome, it seems. Since coming home a day sooner gets me two kisses instead of one, I think I shall continue the practice. What do you say, little Miss Rosebud? Are you as glad to see me as this sister of mine?"

He had taken her tiny hands into his strong, warm grasp; and bending, pressed more than one kiss upon her cold cheek and brow. Baby suffered it in silence, neither shunning nor responding to the caress. She only freed one hand as soon as she could, and laid it, cold and damp as stone, on Enid's wrist, with a clutch which spoke more than any appeal for help. Jack looked at her inquiringly.

"She is pale, Enid!" he announced, in an indignant tone, which would have been ludicrous if circumstances had not made it so unutterably pathetic. "What have you been doing to the child? Her bit of a face is as white as my blotting paper—poor little lassie!"

Still Baby did not answer; and, in very pity, Enid spoke—

"Baby is not very well, this evening," she said, conscious of a strange tone in her own voice; but laying one hand on Jack's arm to distract his attention from the wretched girl, who clung trembling to the other. "It will pass off. Let me take her upstairs first; and then she will be able to talk to you after dinner. You must be hungry. I won't wait to change my dress."

She spoke hurriedly, hardly conscious of what she said; and passed on quietly with her charge—Jack calling after them, as they went upstairs:

"Come down quickly, Enid. Is Baby really ill? Shall I go for the doctor? Make haste and tell me what it is."

Baby dragged Enid into her room; and fell on her knees, sobbing and clinging to her in an agony of terrified helplessness.

"Oh! *need* he know before Clifton tells him? Enid, Enid, I dare not tell. He will kill me. Oh, don't make me see him again—don't, for God's sake, don't! I am so frightened. I will go away to-morrow. Oh, Enid, help me, just this once. I haven't interfered with you, at any rate."

"Get up, Baby," Enid said, shocked to the soul at this humiliation in one usually so gaily self-possessed. "Get up. You have nothing to be afraid of; and you are frightening my aunt. Jack *must* know to-night. Yes"—as Baby broke into a fresh wail of entreaty—"do you think I would suffer him to be deceived a moment longer now? It is bad enough for him as it is; but you only think of yourself, not him."

"I won't see him—I can't," Baby sobbed, hiding her face in the rug, where she had fallen. She seemed growing almost stupid from sheer cowardice.

"Then I must," said Enid, beginning to feel contempt for this miserable little traitor. "If you will not tell him, I must. But you are wrong, Baby—bitterly wrong. For you to speak the truth, bravely and gently, even now, is the only reparation you can ever make. And he would forgive you. Do you think I do not know my brother? His great love would *make* him forgive you; and that forgiveness would be a blessing to you in after-days, when you are gone from us."

She paused, waiting for an answer; but Baby only shook her head obstinately, and sobbed on unheeding; and, without another word, Enid turned away and left the room.

Jack was waiting in the library—tramping up and down over the worn drugget in a fury of impatience; and before she could speak, he had burst out into a torrent of inquiries—angry ones—to wit:—

What ailed Baby? Was no care taken of her when he was away? Jennings had told him she was out alone. Had any one dared to frighten or molest her? And why did Enid stand there like a stick, and not answer him?

She tried to answer—tried bravely; but the very impatience of his voice choked hers. And the fatal words came at last, drowned in tears, with her true arms linked about his neck, and her face hidden where even she should not see the agony on his.

A HOLIDAY IN THE NORTH.

v.

THE following morning, at eight o'clock, we mounted our horses for departure, after a hearty breakfast on shore. Our turnout is quite alarming, consisting, as it does, of ten riding ponies—two a-piece—five baggage ponies, two riding ponies for the guide, Thurdur, and three riding ponies for his two assistant boys; so that, altogether, we have no less than twenty horses to look after. The baggage ponies, besides our personal luggage, carry sundry tins of Australian beef, loaves of bread, boxes of biscuits, Bologna sausages, preserved soups, tea, &c.; as well as a large kettle, tin plates, knives, forks, and spoons. One pony carries our tent, done up into a wonderfully compact piece of baggage, and another is laden with gun cases and fishing rods.

Each one mounts the pony he intends to ride; the loose ones are collected in a bunch, Thurdur holding their halters in one hand, and his reins and whip in the other; while the baggage horses are driven in front of us by the two boys; and so we set our faces eastward, and leave Reykjavik behind.

Wherever you are bound for, you leave Reykjavik by the same road, as it is situated on a promontory running out into the sea. Thus, the first four miles of our ride are over the same ground as our excursion of yesterday. It is a splendid morning, with a blazing sun, the mountains of the Esja—behind which we are to pass—a dark purple mass on our left, and far away across the Faxa Fiord, the white pyramid of Snaefells Jökull gleaming in the bright light. Altogether it is a most picturesque and novel sight as, dropping a little behind, we watch the party of horses and riders trotting along at a round pace over the desolate plain, with clouds of dust drifting slowly from the ponies' feet, and their dark shadows on the lava sand. It reminded one very forcibly of eastern pictures, and one could almost fancy that it was a caravan in the Sahara.

On reaching the Laxà, we allowed the horses to graze for a short time, and then continued our journey, allowing the spare ponies to wander at their own free will, to a limited extent, instead of tying them in a bunch—that is to say, we now drove them in front of us; and this gave us an additional interest and amusement, as now and then

one would break away, and had to be brought back to the right path. The more usual plan appeared to be to tie the head of one horse to the tail of another, and so string them together and ride the foremost one. On crossing the Laxà we met a caravan of nineteen horses thus strung together.

We now entered upon a dreary, undulating plain, covered with blocks of lava, varying in size from masses of several tons weight to mere dust, interspersed with a scanty green herbage, and in places sounding very hollow under our horses' hoofs. To the east it was apparently boundless, and to the south stretched away for miles to a line of blue volcanic peaks in the far distance.

To the north rose the mountains of the Esja, which we hoped before evening to see from the other side; and turning to the left soon after leaving the Laxà, we directed our course for a gap in the line of hills through which there was a pass. It was not long, therefore, before we began to rise slightly—the road getting worse and worse, till it became merely a track beaten down by constant passing. Mr. Shepherd, in his "North-West Peninsula of Iceland," remarks that Icelandic roads are made by taking stones off instead of putting stones on.

But here they had not even gone that length, and in some places it seemed quite impossible that the ponies could get on; but somehow they did in the most remarkable manner, and their agility and sure-footedness were marvellous to us.

The road we were now pursuing is but seldom traversed by visitors to Iceland, as travellers generally take the road to Thingvalla, and go thence either to the Geysers, or along the great north road to Kalmannstunga, and so to Akreyri.

Leaving the seashore, we passed through a wilderness of gigantic ash-heaps, and a little beyond Mosfell began to rise rapidly, skirting a series of deep ravines made by the black, roaring torrents which still occupied them.

The character of our surroundings became wilder and wilder, consisting of bare slopes of richly-coloured lava, crowned with sharp volcanic peaks, while below us the view was continually opening out and increasing in beauty. At our feet lay a vast expanse of undulating land, with here and there a patch of bright green, or the blue gleam of water

in the distance; while far beyond was the long purple range of sharp mountain peaks in the barren Gullbringu Sysla. To the left the view was closed in by the massive pyramid of Skalafell, close to us; and on our right the houses of Reykjavik were just distinguishable across the labyrinth of blue bays and inlets of the sea which lay between.

On reaching the summit of the Svinaskard, we turned for a last look at this lovely prospect, and then dived down the rapid zigzag descent into Svinadalr. Here, for the first and last time, we were obliged to dismount and lead our horses, so steep was the narrow path. But we were soon at the bottom; and, on reaching water, were very glad to dismount again for lunch and half an hour's rest.

On mounting our fresh horses, however (for here we changed them), we began to doubt whether half an hour's rest was such a boon as we had at first imagined. It just gave us time to stiffen a little after our five hours' jogging in Icelandic saddles over Icelandic roads, and a period of mortal agony ensued. Our new ponies were very lively; and we, not being accustomed to them, were in constant terror of broken necks, as well as in severe bodily pain. But matters gradually mended as we went on; and at last we jogged resignedly along, just as we had done in the morning. We were soon out of Svinadalr—a narrow, deep valley, with but little of interest in it—and crossing the Laxá, began to ascend the opposite slope. In the valley all was green and pleasant; but almost the first step of the ascent brought us on to a mass of old black cinders, cemented together into large masses by more recent lava of a dark red colour. This seemed to have come from a wonderful burnt-looking cone just above us, Sandfell by name, under which we passed quite close when we reached the plateau above. But it was soon left behind, and we plunged suddenly down towards the Hvalsfjord and Brynjudalr. We struck the fiord, which runs far up into the land, just at its termination, where it is continued for a short distance by two fertile valleys, Brynjudalr and Botnsdalr, which are separated by a gigantic promontory of precipitous basaltic rock called Mulafjall.

Across the blue calm water of the Hvalsfjord we could see on the opposite shore, scattered at intervals along the strip of green land which lay between the cliffs and the water, several farms, with their accompany-

ing enclosures; and Thurdur coolly pointed to the most distant of these, and informed us that there were our quarters for the coming night.

Our hearts sank within us as we looked, and the thought that we had to ride all round the head of the fiord, and as far as we could see on the opposite shore, was almost too much for us. But it would not do to give in, more especially as we had some doubts as to the feasibility of reaching Reykholt on the following day—a point which was absolutely necessary for the success of our plans; so we put a good face on the matter, and said nothing.

Descending rapidly to the water's edge, we passed some excellent specimens of columnar basalt (of which there seems to be a good deal about here), and two very pretty waterfalls. On reaching the water's edge at full gallop—very much against our will, but the ponies were too much for us—down a steep slope of grass, in a manner which we thought would certainly put a sudden and fatal termination to our tour, we dismounted for a few moments, to give the ponies a last feed, and then took our way along the narrow path which winds round the foot of the Mularfjall, and for which there is but just room betwixt the cliff and the water's edge.

As we got round the point, and entered Botnsdalr, a narrow, shingly beach appeared, and along this we rode at a sharp trot, until we got within about half a mile of the end of the fiord. Here, to our surprise, Thurdur drove the baggage horses, at right angles to our course, straight into the water, and, following them himself, broke into a canter and rode straight for the opposite shore. Seeing that he was cutting off a round of about a mile and a half or more, we followed, nothing loath; and then ensued a most ludicrous scene, but, personally, somewhat painful withal. All the horses were going as hard as they could go, through salt water varying in depth from a couple of inches to two feet. There was no apparent reason for the hurry, but the pace, nevertheless, increased as we neared the other shore, and the water spurted up like fireworks on all sides, and drenched us to the skin, from the waist downwards.

For two more hours we rode along the shore as fast as ever we could push along, in almost every little bay coming across perfect masses of eider ducks, lining the shore and sitting as thick as leaves on the water,

and which took no further notice of us than just to move out of our path—here finding the mortal remains of a dead seal and seeing the head of another on the surface of the water as he swam ashore, and there riding into the water again to get round some rock or small promontory where the beach disappeared.

After something more than ten hours in the saddle, we rode up to the little farm enclosure of Ferstikla, and dismounting immediately, began to unpack our baggage and pitch our tent. It was by this time rather cold, a few drops of rain fell, and the wind was rising; and as we sat outside the tent on the grass, preparing the soup (to be boiled at the farmhouse), opening the tin of Australian meat, hauling out the biscuit box, and searching here and there for things we could not find amongst the baggage, being meanwhile ravenous for food, we felt sufficiently wretched. At last, however, the hot soup came back from the farmhouse, and was followed by Bologna sausage, Australian beef, tea, biscuits, and butter; and while engaged upon these material pleasures, we were enabled also to enjoy the scene before us. Right opposite, across the fiord, rose the long, even ridge of the Reynivollahals; to the left, at the head of the fiord, were the Mulafjall and Brynjudalr, now purple and hazy in the evening light; while to the south-west was the huge mass of the Akrafjall, standing all alone, and entirely shutting out the sea from our view.

Under the influence of food, our spirits rose somewhat; and by the time we had got into our blanket bags and lit our pipes, inside the tent, we began even to be merry. But we were not allowed entirely to forget worldly cares; for the wind continued to rise, and the tent flapped in a most ominous manner; until at last one of our party nobly sacrificed himself to the public good, and, getting out of his blanket bag, went outside and tightened the tent pegs all round. But still the tent flapped, there was another shower of rain, the ground was very hard; and, altogether, the night's rest was but a broken and unsatisfactory one.

The next morning ablution in the open air was wretchedly cold work, but breakfast and hot tea cheered us up, and we started at about 8.30 in good spirits. Turning our backs on Ferstikla, we rode over the ridge behind the farm, and descending rapidly on the other side, passed several lakes, skirted

by bold, rocky hills, which divided green and fertile-looking valleys. We held on our way, almost due north, over another pass in the mountains, leading down into Ekoradalr.

As we came to Skorradalr, we passed several fine waterfalls, but one especially attracted our attention; it was very like the waterfall of the Diablarêts in duplicate. Two streams started far away up in the snows of Skardsheidi, and as they fell from ridge to ridge, gradually approached one another with wonderful symmetry, until at last they joined, and plunged down, with a final leap, into a black gulf below, and thence flowed gently on into Skorradalsvatn.

We too, soon reached the lake, and rode for some distance, through low birch scrub, along its margin, till we reached its outlet into the river Andakilsa. Here we forded the stream, and held on our northerly course, crossing another ridge, whence we took our last look at the beautiful snow-clad Skardsheidi, and then descended along a curious ridge, like an unfinished gigantic railway embankment (I presume the moraine of some extinct glacier), to the valley of the Grimsa.

This river was the broadest that we had yet seen, but was nevertheless easily forded; and passing round the end of another precipitous basaltic promontory, running out into the plain, we called a halt in the warm sunshine, and dismounted by the little stream for our midday sausage and biscuit.

After changing horses, we rode on across the Flokadalsa, and turning somewhat to the right, or east, entered upon a stony desert, perfectly flat, without a sign of vegetation, and raised some twenty or thirty feet above the level of the plain. For a very long way this continued; till at last, always bearing to the right, we dropped down again into the valley of Reykjadalr.

Here the clouds of steam from the hot springs which abound in the valley (and from which it takes its name) at once caught the eye, and several of them we passed quite close. The river in this valley winds considerably; but Thurdur, apparently, did not see any reason why we should do likewise, and accordingly took a bee line straight up the valley, crossing the river fourteen or fifteen different times as it wound backwards and forwards.

At one of the numerous fords, we saw a curious sight: in the very middle of the

river a boiling spring was bubbling and spurting away in great excitement, at the top of a mound of (probably its own) siliceous deposit, some eight or ten feet high.

At last Thurdur pointed out Reykholt in the distance, and our pace (as was always the case) increased considerably as the journey's end drew near, and soon after four o'clock we dismounted by the little church, behind which the hot springs were sending up their white clouds of steam.

The most usual custom in Ireland is for travellers to take up their quarters for the night in the church itself; but the clergyman at Reykholt appeared to have some objection to our doing so on this occasion, so we did not press the point, but pitched our tent by one of the small geysers at the back. We found it very damp, as the wind veered round during the night, and we got the full benefit of the steam from the spring; but it was a great convenience to have hot water at hand for cooking operations. The hot water from this spring is conveyed in pipes to a sort of round tank just behind the farmhouse, called (from the man who made it) Snorri's bath. But the Icelanders of the present day do not appear to affect baths very much, and Snorri's bath is now only used for washing clothes.

The next morning we had to go through the unpleasant process of striking the tent and packing up the boxes in a cold north-east wind and driving rain, and by the time we were ready for a start, we already felt most unpleasantly damp. But this is one of the little disagreeables of travel that one has to put up with; so after a cup of coffee with the sturdy parson in his guest-room, we mounted our beasts (which had meantime been standing out in the rain, getting the saddles well soaked for our reception), and rode off, in the teeth of the wind, up the valley towards Giljar.

For a long while we rode on in perfect silence, our heads bent well down to shield our faces from the cutting rain, and our feet and legs wet through and as cold as ice. Gradually, however, the rain got less, and after about an hour and a half of most monotonous work, it stopped, and we dismounted to give the horses a feed. We, too, were by no means sorry to get on our legs again, and flasks quickly made their appearance, after which we had recourse to various plans for restoring suspended circulation, beating our arms about, running up

and down like lunatics, &c., much to the amusement of Thurdur and the boy, who seemed thoroughly impervious to wind and rain.

It did us good, however; for on remounting, it was evident that there was a revulsion of feeling amongst us, which showed itself in the cracking of whips, singing of songs, making jokes, and galloping far ahead of the pack horses, instead of the silent plodding which had been the order of the day at first.

Now, too, the aspect of the country began to change. We left Giljar on our right, and skirting the slopes of the Bœjarfell, crossed, one after the other, a series of deep ravines of the most rugged wildness, eaten from the lava by the fierce torrents which sometimes foamed along through their depths, but which were now reduced to fordable streams.

Since the rain had stopped, the wind had become stronger than ever; and although it helped to dry our wet clothes, it began to be a considerable nuisance, from the constant cramming on of the hat that was required in order to retain it on one's head. We were at some little elevation above the plain; ahead of us was a great broken mass of ancient lava, the Tunga, rearing itself up into a mountain; while on either side around its base a more modern lava stream, divided higher up by the pyramid of Strutr, joined again like some huge glacier, and swept on unbroken down the valley. Comparatively modern only was this stream, for its surface was covered thickly in some parts with luxuriant green birch scrub, and in others with the deep soft grey moss so often found upon the more recent lava.

Riding down to the little farm of Husafell, we got its inmate to ride with us across this lava stream to show us the way, as Thurdur had never yet been over this road; and plunging in amongst the brushwood, we were soon forced to ride in single file, on account of the banks of the deep-worn track, and the roots of the brushwood projecting therefrom. The pack horses were still being driven in front, and occasionally one of them would stop in the narrow path, or dive off into the birch scrub, creating a long stoppage or an exciting hunt. At last, however, we got clear of the brushwood; and after a short canter across a stretch of grey lava sand (which the morning rain had not been sufficient to prevent drifting with

the wind), we forded the rapid cold glacier stream of the Hvita, and rode up to the little farm enclosure of Kalmannstunga, at twelve o'clock noon.

For some time past, the sky had been of a dull yellow colour, most fierce and threatening-looking, and we thought we were about to have a tremendous storm. Thurdur, looking southward towards the route we intended to take on the morrow, quietly remarked—

"Bad weather in Kaldidalr now—stones flying. If like this to-morrow, we cannot go Kaldidalr."

And, indeed, we thanked our stars we were not there to-day. The slight depression between Ok and Geitlands Jökull, over which the road lay, appeared to be in a regular hurricane of wind. Huge masses of cloud, of the colour of a yellow London fog, drifted across, and the whole air seemed to be pervaded with the same tint.

The snows of Ok were almost hidden; but a splendid broad field of snow, lying between two mountain summits, showed us where Geitlands Jökull was; while, farther to the left, half the white dome of Eyriks Jökull, supported by its rugged black cliffs, showed beyond the sharp pyramid of Strutr. To our right was the valley up which we had come, closed in by the broken Tunga; and at our feet lay a flat plain of lava and lava dust, drifting in the wind, some two miles broad.

As we stood at the door of the farmhouse taking in this view, the rain came on again suddenly with increased fury, and we retired into the guest-room, and devoted ourselves to the pleasures of sausage, Australian meat, and tobacco.

The rain still came down in driving sheets; but we could not afford to lose the afternoon, so we determined we would give it till two p.m. to clear up, and if by that time it had not done so, we would pay no further attention to the elements, but start off for the Cave of Surtshellir.

ANGUISH IN PRINT.

IN THE STRICTEST CONFIDENCE.

TEAR THE TWENTY-SECOND.

A FLY IN A WEB.

MY spirits rose a little after breakfast the next morning, though I only smiled sadly as I thought of my many disappointments; but we had had a long talk with

Patty, and she had faithfully promised never, upon any consideration, to divulge one of our secrets. Of course I did not like making another confidante; but, under the circumstances, what could one do?

"Ah!" said Patty; "but it was a great shame that you did not tell me before."

"Why, we should have told you," said Clara—a wicked storyteller—"only you do sleep so soundly, dear."

Though, after all, perhaps that was nearly the truth; for, if she had not slept so soundly, we should have been obliged to let her into our secrets.

This satisfied her, but it did not satisfy me; for the stupid creature must go about looking so knowing, and cunning, and deep, and laugh and leer at Clara, and nod and wink at me, all day long, till it was dreadfully aggravating, and enough to make anybody suspicious; and I almost wonder that one of the watchful dragons did not have something to say about it.

"Why, we shall be obliged to have her in the room all the time," I said to Clara, as I was thinking of my next interview with Achille; that is, if I ever was to have another.

"Never mind, dear," replied Clara; "it cannot matter much. She is very stupid, and I dare say that I can keep her in order."

I contrived to let Achille know all when he came the next day, and gave him to understand that he might try again upon any night he liked; for the last was only a false alarm, and all would have gone well had I but only held tightly by the cord. I gave him the information, written in French, at the top of my exercise, while Miss Funness was in the room, when if he had not the audacity to call me up to his elbow—for he had seen it all in an instant—and if he did not point out and mark two or three mistakes in the note I had scribbled so hastily at the top about the last meeting. However, I suppose he wishes me to speak his own language correctly; and none but the brave deserve the fair.

There was one thing, though, in our correspondence which I did not like—poor Achille never could take any interest in our English poets; so that, if one quoted a bit of Byron or Moore to him, it was good for nothing, while he, the tiresome man, was always filling up his notes with scraps of Molière, and I am sure I always praised

them, and said that they were very beautiful.

And now once more came the night for meeting, with all its heart-throbbing flurry and excitement; but this time, apparently, without any of the terrible contretemps that had previously troubled us. Patty was in high glee, and sat on the edge of her bedstead, munching an Abernethy biscuit, and grinning; while her great eyes, instead of half closing, like anybody else's would when they were laughing, became more round and wide open than ever. It seemed to be capital fun to her, and over and over again, when I glanced at her, she was giggling and laughing; and I do believe that, if I had not been there, she would have got up and danced about the room.

But it was time to start at last, and upon this occasion I had no noisy drawer to open, for I had a ball of new, stout string in my pocket. So, one at a time, we glided along the passage, Clara going first, Patty second, and I followed behind, to close our door as quietly as was possible.

"Pat, pat, pat," and, with a gentle rustle, we passed along the passage, and stood at last in the little end room, while I am sure that no one could have heard our footsteps.

Clara made one effort to get rid of Patty before we started, but it was of no avail.

"Aint you afraid of catching a worse cold?" she said; "hadn't you better stay in the bed-room, dear?"

For really she had a most miserable cold, and her eyes and nose looked as red as red.

"I sha'n't catch any more cold than you will," she said, just as she had said once before upon a similar occasion—"I want to see all the fun."

Fancy calling it fun!

So we were obliged to suffer her presence; but I am afraid that I was uncharitable enough to wish that she might catch a bad sore throat for her pains, or else something that would keep her from coming again.

However, there we all were; and as soon as ever we were all in the little room, I secured the door with a fork that I had brought for the purpose, and then, pulling out my string, I unfastened the window, when, fortunately, it glided up beautifully.

Clara was the first to look out, and it not being a dark night, she popped in again directly, saying in a whisper—

"There he is. I can see him."

"Let me look," said Patty Smith, quite out loud; and then, when her head was out of the window, if she did not give quite a loud cough, in not only a most indiscreet way, but, really, one that was most reprehensible.

I pulled her back as quickly as I could, and, in a whisper, gave her a good scolding. Then I tied my scissors to the end of the string, to make it go down quickly, and swinging them over the big cornice, I looked down; but I could not see poor Achilles, for he had come close up to the house, and was, of course, out of sight beneath the cornice.

"But I shall see him soon," I said to myself; and went on letting down the scissors till the string felt slack, and I knew that it had touched the ground, when, just as before, I felt it seized and jerked about, as if being attached to something; and well I knew what, though a half-fear took hold upon me now lest it should break the string, which was not so strong as I could wish. But now there was the signal; and I began to pull up the heavy rope ladder, cutting my poor little fingers with the string. At first it came up pretty quickly, but soon slower, for it seemed to grow heavier; and at last, when I made sure that it must be nearly up, if it must not turn contrary against us, and catch against the cornice, and remain immovable.

What was I to do? It was of no use to pull and jerk; for, if we had pulled any harder, I'm sure that the string must have broken. If it had not been for Clara, I should have climbed out of the window, and stood upon the cornice, to set it at liberty, for she could easily have held my hand, so that I should really have been quite safe.

But she would not hear of this, and I don't know what I should have done if I had not thought of lowering the ladder down a little way, and then trying again, when, to my great delight, up it came, and Clara soon had hold of a pair of great iron hooks, just the sort of hooks I expected to see; and on fixing them upon the sill, my side, we found that they fitted beautifully; while I threw myself upon them to hold them in their places, lest they should slip.

Just after that there was a sharp rustle of the rope, and then it was pulled tight;

while now, making Clara hold one hook and Patty the other, I strained out as far as I could reach, so that I could see Achille mounting, slowly mounting, the dangerous thing—which was not a ladder, after all, but two ropes, with loops at about every foot distance; and, although we all held on as tightly as we could, when he was about a dozen feet from the ground the tiresome thing began to twist and spin round and round, so that poor Achille was twisting just as if he was being roasted, and I'm sure he must have been as giddy as giddy.

Fortunately for him, he did not always go the same way round, but twisted back again, or else he must have dropped off. It was not as if he had been close up to the house, for then he could have touched the wall and stopped himself; but the cornice, which was a good width, kept him away, so that he swung clear. And perhaps, after all, it was quite as well, for he might else have gone right through one of the windows.

It was very shuddery and dreadful; but we poor girls could do nothing but hold the rope, hold our breath, and, as Clara said, hold our tongues; though Patty would keep letting go, and staring out of the window when she was not wanted to.

"Won't I tease him about this," she said. "Only see, the first time he finds fault with my exercises."

"Hush! you foolish child," I exclaimed. "Good gracious me! you must never say a word to him about it, under any consideration."

"Mussn't I?" said Patty, as innocently as could be.

"No, of course not," said Clara; "that would ruin everything."

For I was now reaching as far as could be out of the window, to see what poor Achille was about; for the rope seemed to be doing nothing, and did not jerk as if he was getting higher and higher. And then, oh, dear! if I could not just see one of his feet where his head was last time I looked; for he was sitting upon the sill of the first floor window—the best bed-room, which was, of course, empty—and, I suppose, resting himself. All at once, though, I heard him whisper—

"Is de rope sauff?"

"Yes, yes," I whispered, in reply.

And then the rope crunched again upon the cornice, as if he had again committed to it his weight, when I drew in my head and

waited, trembling, for him to reach the window, and it did seem such a long time to come so short a distance; but, as he told me afterwards, the loops would keep slipping away when he wanted to put his feet in them, besides the rope spinning him round until he was giddy. At last I looked out again, and then drew back my head in agony; for if he was not hanging by one leg, head downwards, just like my poor Dick, the canary, did in London, when it caught its claw in the wire of the cage and could not get loose.

As I said, I drew in my head, quite in an agony of fear; but the rope jerked about so I was obliged, and then I ejaculated, quite loudly—

"Oh, Achille!"

"Eh, yais, oui," he exclaimed. "I ave put in mine's foot."

"In what—in what, mon cher?" I exclaimed.

"Oh," he gasped, in a thick voice, "mais je suis giddy. I ave puts my foot trou de loops, and cannot get him back."

"Oh, pray come in!" cried Clara, who had heard every word, and seemed quite horrified—"pray come in and shut the window, and let's go back."

"Oh, nonsense," I said, "he will be hung, he will die! His head is hanging down, and his leg sticking up in the rope. He has slipped. Whatever shall we do?"

"Why don't you cut the rope?" said Patty; but of course no one took any notice of her.

"Let's unhook the things," whispered Clara, "and then drop him down into the lavatories."

"Oh, how can you be so stupid!" I said. "It would kill him: he's right above the first floor window sill."

"Well, but we can't shut the window with those things there," said Clara; "and it will not do to be found out."

I looked again, and there he still was twirling round just as if he was being roasted, and the rope shaking so that I thought it must break. I kept whispering to him, but he did not hear me; and, just dim and indistinctly as he was seen, I could make out that he was trying to double himself up and get his hands to the rope.

I never, I'm sure, felt anything so dreadful before in my life as those few moments when he was struggling there, and me unable to help him; for, in addition to

the horror, there was the pricking of my conscience, as it told me that this was all my fault, and that if he was killed I should have murdered him, which was very dreadful, you know; when that last affair of the cistern, which he escaped from with a fearful drenching, ought to have been a warning to me to have spared him from running any more risks on my behalf.

I declare that I should have tried to slide down the rope to help him, or else to share his fate, if Clara had not restrained me once more; but she kept tightly hold of my waist, till there came up a sound like the gnashing together of teeth, the rope gave a terrible shake, and then the iron hooks fell jingling upon the floor.

Then there was a crashing and rustling of leaves and branches, as if a heavy body had fallen amongst trees, and then all was still, except for a deep groan—a French groan—which came up, thrilling us all horribly; for the rope had come unfastened, and had slipped through the round rings of the hooks.

We all stood aghast for a few minutes; but at last I summoned up courage enough to lean out, and whisper loudly—

"Achille, mon ami, Achille!" when, as if in answer, came a most doleful "H-o-o-o, bo-o-o, ho-o-o-o!" which made one's very blood run cold.

"That's only an owl," said Clara the next minute.

"A howl!" said Patty; "that it wasn't, it was a groan, just the same as the pigs give when they're dying in our slaughter-house at home."

I leaned out of the window as far as I could, once more, and was trying to pierce the darkness below, when all at once I heard a window to the right opening very gently, and squeaking as it ran up, and that window, I felt sure, was the lady principal's; so, recollecting the night of the alarm from Clara's basin—agonized though I was—I felt obliged to close ours quietly, pick up the two hooks, and then, leaving the room, we all three glided back to our room—my heart chiding me the while for forsaking poor Achille in such a time of dire distress. But what could I do? To stay or to raise an alarm was to be found out, and perhaps—ay, perhaps!—poor fellow, he was not hurt, after all. And it was just as well that we did slip back, for we had hardly closed the door before the alarm bell Mrs.

Blunt had had fitted up on the top of the house began to ring, and we heard the Fraulein jump out of bed with a regular bump upon the floor.

We were not many seconds scuffling into bed; and, just as we lay down, we heard the Fraulein's door open, and then there were voices talking and a good deal of buzzing about, for quite half an hour. But we thought it better not to go out of our room; for, when Clara took a peep, Miss Furness was hunting several of the girls back into their rooms with—

"Nothing the matter, young ladies. Back to your dormitories."

So we lay quite still, and listened; while I essayed to allay my horrible fears about poor Achille, and tried to fancy that every sigh of the wind among the branches was him stealing—no, I won't say stealing, it looks so bad—hurrying away. Then we heard the Fraulein come in, and her bed creak loudly as she lay down; and then once more all was quiet, and I felt sure that they could not have seen or heard anything, but I dared not get up again to see. Clara said she was sure she heard Mrs. Blunt talking to the policeman out of the window again. Perhaps she did, but I did not; though it was most likely, after the ringing of the alarm bell.

"What are you sobbing for?" said Clara, all at once.

"Oh, I know he's killed," I said.

"Pooh, nonsense," she replied, in her unfeeling way, "he only went plop among the bushes; and they say exiles always manage to fall on their feet when they come to England, just like cats. He is not hurt, unless he has scratched that beautiful face of his a little bit."

"Then you don't think he is killed, dear?" I said, seeking for comfort, alas! where I was but little likely to find it, I'm sorry to say.

"Not I," said Clara; "it was not far enough to fall."

"I sha'n't go no more," drawled Patty; "it aint half such fun as I thought it was. Why didn't he come right up?"

"Don't be such a goose!" cried Clara to the noodle. "Why, didn't he get his leg caught, and then didn't the rope give way?"

"I'm sure I dunno," said Patty, yawning; and then, in spite of all the trouble, we all dropped off fast asleep.



THE GREEN-EYED MONSTER LOOSE.

ONE February morning, about ten years ago, a man of between thirty and forty sat in his lodgings, on the drawing-room floor in Museum-street, London, writing. His table was thickly strewn with old books and engravings, some of the former lying open, others with numerous slips of paper sticking out from between the leaves to mark certain places; for he was writing a History of the Drama backwards, taking the nineteenth century first, and then going to the eighteenth; and, as he had accumulated enough manuscript for two octavo volumes without reaching George the Third's reign, and proposed to get as close to the Flood as he could, it threatened to be a voluminous, exhaustive, and costly work. Fortunately, however, he never dreamed of its paying. He was a bachelor, with a fair income, riding his hobby horse, and it was cheaper than a thoroughbred, or even a hack. Cheaper, but not so conducive to health, perhaps, for he looked pale and nervous. Indeed, his general appearance was delicate, his figure small and slight, his hair and sparse whiskers the colour of tow, his eyes weak and prominent, and at any sudden noise he started. Even so small a matter as the maid-servant opening the door startled him, and it did not seem to compose his nerves that she announced a lady.

"A lady! What lady?" he asked.

"She wouldn't give her name," replied the girl.

"Ask her, tell her—" he began; but the entrance of the visitor in question, closely veiled, cut his directions short.

He rose, and hurried forward to offer a chair, so disclosing a limp.

Directly they were alone she raised her veil; the man literally staggered back, and caught hold of the table for support.

"Hush!" said the lady, placing her finger on her lip as she went back to the door, which she opened. Satisfied that the girl had gone downstairs, she returned, and exclaimed—

"Oh, Mr. Peters! Do you know anything of my husband?"

The poor man sank down in a chair, and collapsed.

His visitor searched about in a rapid yet

self-possessed manner, and found glasses and a decanter in a cupboard.

"Not that, not that," he murmured, as she offered him the peculiar sherry which was left out for the benefit of a thievish landlady; and fumbling for his keys, he managed, though with shaking hand, to unlock a compartment of his writing table in which a bottle of the wine reserved for his own drinking was always kept. Wonderful is the instinct of self-preservation: a man going to be hung at nine has been known to refuse port at eight because he was subject to the gout.

When he had swallowed a couple of glasses of wine, Mr. Peters revived a little. Then the lady continued—

"You do know something, or you would not be so agitated. Oh, pray, relieve me from this horrible suspense. I cannot draw money or anything till there is some proof. Tell me, is he dead?"

Mr. Peters shuddered.

"I—I don't know. How should I know? I was not aware, when I saw you last, that you had a husband. What makes you think—"

"I will tell you," interrupted the lady. "I am now twenty-five. Seven years ago I was married to a monster. He was old and frightful; but my parents were very strict, and thought all pleasure wicked, so that I was glad of any excuse to leave home, and when they offered him to me I took him without hesitation. He was rich, he made good settlements; but, oh, his jealousy was fearful. He did not shut me up—indeed, he rather courted than shunned society, for he had a horror of his dominant passion being suspected; yet anybody could see it who had eyes, for he could not conceal it a bit. It was not only of me he was jealous. He had quarrelled with all his brothers and sisters, because he thought his parents loved them best; he had a favourite dog poisoned because it grew too fond of a servant. There would be no end to enumerating instances of his mania, for it amounted to that; some of his extravagances were quite inconsistent with sanity. We never had a house of our own, but wandered about from place to place, living principally on the Continent; and being utterly inexperienced in the ways of the world, I attributed this to a love of travel and change of scene, and did not discover that his restlessness was in reality caused by the civility of some casual

male acquaintance towards myself, till after his first duel."

"Duel!"

"Duel. He was born and bred in Germany, and his ideas about many things were not at all English. I believe he considered killing any one not only pleasant, but something to be proud of."

Mr. Peters groaned.

"Was it not shocking?" continued the lady. "Well, though his hair was grey, he was very strong and active, and a dangerous antagonist too, I believe, with either small sword, sabre, or pistol."

"Ah!"

"It was at Dieppe, and about six months after our marriage, that I was first made an excuse for bloodshed. A polite young Frenchman, who had sat next me a few times at the table d'hôte, and danced with me at the assembly rooms, was so civil as to offer me a bouquet, and my monster wounded him in the arm for it. After that, I lived in a perfect state of terror, lest by some careless word, or even look, I should bring about a calamity, and for some time I succeeded in avoiding any excuse for quarrel; but a year afterwards, at Heidelberg, a German professor wrote a Sanscrit ode upon me: my husband cut his nose off with a weapon they call a schlöger. He never ill-used me, or even upbraided me—indeed, I gave him no cause; but he watched me as a cat does a mouse, so that life was a perfect nightmare. I asked him one day, when he was in a soft humour, if there was anything in my manners, or dress, or way of speaking, which excited his unworthy mistrust.

"'No,' said he, with a grim calmness which made me shudder; 'if there had been, I should have shot us.'

"'Us?' I exclaimed.

"'Yes,' he said; 'you first and myself afterwards.'

"He hated England, because he could not fight duels there, but he was obliged to pay periodical visits to this country on business; and as this conversation took place during one of them, I went straight to my family lawyer, and he took me before a magistrate, and I swore the peace against my husband, under whose roof I never again stepped, and in due time I got a legal separation from him, my success being principally due to his own violence in the witness box, where he gave vent to the most atrocious sentiments. But

though we were separated, he did not give up watching me. At the most unexpected times and places he would turn up, generally disguised; and if any man happened to be in company with me on several occasions running, and to speak to me rather more often than to the others, I was sure to receive a laconic note warning me to shun that new acquaintance; and since I durst neither disobey nor disclose the tyrannical order, I fear that I acquired a reputation for fickleness and prudery. Little did my censors know the nervous distress occasioned by the idea that an eye is always upon you. I feel as if it were on me now."

"Good gracious!"

"Compose yourself, it was but a fancy. I have neither seen nor heard of him since August last. That would be a relief; but his man of business has not heard of him either. It is not only that he has not transmitted me my money, he has drawn none for his own use. Every other means having been employed to trace him without success, I at last thought of you. We met, you may remember, for the first time at the Richmond Easter ball; and afterwards, whether by accident or design—"

"Accident, pure accident, madam, I assure you."

"Qui s'excuse s'accuse," said the lady, smiling.

"I know it, I know it; though I cannot pronounce it. But still, madam, though I own appearances might have been against me, there was no design whatever."

And the poor man wiped his forehead.

"You are not a flatterer, at any rate," continued the lady. "Well, the accident recurred quite frequently enough to exasperate my husband; and as I saw him, disguised as a waiter, at Lady Chiswick's fête the last time we met; and as you went away directly after, my husband disappearing simultaneously and not having been heard of since; and as you are lame, and in a deplorable state of nervous prostration, I cannot help suspecting that you went abroad, that he followed you and forced you into a duel, that he wounded you, and you killed him."

"I have not been abroad at all," gasped Mr. Peters, pouring himself out another glass of sherry. "But, come," he cried, presently, nerved by the stimulant and desperation; "you have told me your story, and I will tell you mine. I have met your

husband, though I do not know for certain what has become of him. It will be a relief to speak, for this life of secret apprehension and perpetual anxiety is killing me.

"In August last, a few days after the fête you alluded to, I went for my annual holiday. I have a self-imposed task here, a little book, which takes up a good deal of my time, and causes me to lead a somewhat sedentary life; and I find a month of air and exercise necessary for my health. My idea was to walk through North Wales, with a change of linen and a few necessaries in a knapsack. So I went first to Chester, left my portmanteau at the hotel there, and took the train on to Conway; from which place I made a circuit, which brought me on the third day to Capel Craig, where I remained a couple of days, and then started again in the early morning, with the intention of crossing Snowdon, and sleeping that night at Llanberris, on the other side.

"I had not as yet picked up any acquaintance during my walk, as one generally does in a pedestrian excursion over such favourite ground; though I knew that another excursionist was following the same track, for I had caught sight of him several times, half a mile or so behind me. Once, feeling inclined for companionship, I sat down and smoked a pipe, to let him come up with me; but his taste was evidently for solitude, for he declined the chance I gave him, and halted too. I rather regretted this British exclusiveness now, for a companion lightens the journey when you have a long climb up a steep hill on a warm day.

"The first six or seven miles was easy walking on the level road; then came an hour's wading through marshes; then came the narrow neck of a lake, which I crossed in a boat ingeniously fastened to both banks by the same rope, by hauling on which you ferried yourself over; after that it was all pretty steep hills. Trying to cut off a corner, I lost the track; but as it was a perfectly clear day, without a wreath of cloud or fog visible, that did not much matter. I had only to keep on going up, unless the ascent led me away from the principal summit, which was visible nearly all the way.

"At midday, I came to a gap in the side of the mountain, the site of a long deserted mine, as was shown by a shaft which had been sunk directly in my path; and I shuddered as I peered into the unprotected abyss, and thought that if clouds had settled

down upon the range there was nothing to have prevented my walking right into it.

"I had taken a light lunch with me, and this seemed a good place to rest and eat it in. So I sat under the shadow of a rock and refreshed myself.

"I was interrupted in this pleasant employment by a footstep; and looking up I saw a man standing before me, with his arms folded on his chest, and regarding me in a threatening manner. I need not describe him to you, madam—it was your husband.

"Your name is Peters?' he observed.

"Yes,' said I; 'but, pardon me, you have the advantage of me.'

"I seek none,' he replied. 'You desire my death, and I have followed you here to give you a fair and equal chance of compassing it. I also desire yours.'

"My dear sir,' said I, 'you are labouring under a very great mistake; I have no ill-feeling towards you. Why should I wish the death of a perfect stranger?'

"Because you could marry his widow.'

"And then, madam, he mentioned you, and said that he had been watching me for a month past. And he put a most extraordinary interpretation upon our innocent acquaintanceship.

"When I protested that he was in error, and that I had not even known till that moment that you were a married woman, he said that such a cowardly evasion should avail me nothing, and producing a brace of pistols, he challenged me to fight him.

"I explained to him that if he had any cause of complaint against me, which was absurd, he had his remedy at law; that the practice of duelling was foolish, unchristian, and obsolete; that no one had fought with deadly weapons in this country for a quarter of a century; that if we now revived the custom, the survivor would be hung.

"Not so,' said your husband; 'we are alone, and in a desolate part of the mountain. The one who falls might lie here for months before his skeleton was discovered; and who would suspect how he came by his death? But the safety of the survivor can be yet further secured: he has but to drag his defeated enemy to the brink of yonder mine-shaft, little force would suffice to tumble it into the gulf; and then, what trace would be possible? But I am here to fight, not to argue. Here is your pistol—loaded, but not capped—and here are caps. Stay where you are, and I will take up my

position near the edge of the shaft, which will save you trouble if luck attends you.'

"'Do not flatter yourself that your precautions will avail,' I cried, in considerable trepidation. 'Murder will out; and you will forfeit your life for mine.'

"'That makes no odds to me,' he replied. 'Fops like you have made life an insufferable burden to me.'

"'Poor man! how he loved me!' sighed the lady.

"'I could hardly believe that he was in earnest,' continued Mr. Peters; 'but he retired to the spot he had mentioned, near the mouth of the hole, thirteen or fourteen yards off, and presently called out—

"'Have you capped your pistol?'

"'I had not, but did so, mechanically. I do not know why, for I think I had no intention of firing at him. But, in truth, I was like one in a dream.

"'After I have counted five, it is lawful to fire,' he cried presently.

"'I had seen 'The Rivals' performed, and knew from Bob Acres how to stand so as to show the smallest front to the adversary. I also held my pistol pointed towards him, covering my body with it and my right arm as well as I could.

"'At that moment I remember that a gleam of comfort shot across my mind—Was it all a practical joke?

"'One, two, three, four, five!'

"'I felt a sharp pang in my right leg, which, I suppose, caused me to clutch the weapon I held convulsively, for it exploded as I fell to the ground. I knew that I was hit, and determined to lie quite still, and pretend to be insensible. I had heard that such a plan answered with bears, and thought it might with duellists. Only—oh, horror!—he would come and drag me to that awful hole, and thrust me over the edge. I have a far greater dread of falling from a height than of any other kind of death, even that by fire. It is very foolish and illogical, for such an ending must be painless; but it is not a matter of reason. The cause is purely physical, and has something to do with the brain or stomach. I have often experimented upon myself, and observed—on the brink of a precipice, I lose my humanity and become the most ignoble of reptiles. I don't suppose there is any meanness, any crime, I would not swear to commit to save myself from being shoved over. I determined to grapple with my foe in good

earnest when it came to that. How I regretted that my pistol had gone off! I was quite ready now to shoot him with it when he stooped over me.

"'But he did not come. When a minute, I suppose, had elapsed, I opened my eyes and glanced round—he was not near. I cautiously raised my head, so as to see in the direction where he had last stood—he was not there. I sat up. Where had he gone to?

"'The blood was flowing rather freely from a wound in my leg, just above the knee. I tied my pocket handkerchief as tightly as I could round the place, and got on to my feet. My hurt did not, to my surprise, prevent me from walking, so I advanced to the edge of the shaft, and saw—his pistol."

"'Well, well,' said the lady, 'pray, go on. Here, take another glass of sherry. That is it. Now, what next?'

"'My first idea was one of relief that, if he was prowling in the neighbourhood, he was at least unarmed. My second—Oh, madam, you can guess what my dread was, and, alas! is. My pistol went off; it was pointed in his direction; he was standing on the edge of the pit. Oh, the thought has been wearing me to death ever since, though I have never before uttered it—the thought that perhaps I am a murderer!'

And Mr. Peters buried his face in his hands.

"'Then you never saw him again?' the lady asked, when he was calmer.

"'Never. I looked up and down the mountain, and to either side; but I was alone. I kicked the pistol into the shaft, and threw the one I still held in my hand after it, and listened; but never heard them fall. Then I went on my way, and struck the proper path; but before I had got a thousand yards higher, pain, the loss of blood, and horror, caused me to faint. When I came to my senses again, a man was stooping over me with a flask in his hand. In reply to his questions, I told him that I had met with an accident while pistol practising, which was literally true. With great difficulty, he helped me to the top of Snowdon, and there I got a pony, which had carried up some lady who kindly consented to walk down, and was taken to Llanberris, where a surgeon dressed my wound, and attended me till I was fit to leave. Glad enough was I to get rid of him, for I was always dreading lest he

should ask how I managed to inflict a wound with such a direction on myself; but, happily, the idea never seemed to occur to him."

"Why did you feel that dread?" the lady asked, soothingly. "Why did you attempt to conceal what had happened? My unfortunate husband brought his fate upon himself. You could not possibly incur any blame."

"Could I not, though?" replied Mr. Peters. "Ah, madam, you know little of the English law, which would never enter into the rights of the matter. Two men met, and had a duel; one was killed—therefore the survivor must be hung. It would not take into account that this unfortunate survivor was forced into his unlawful position against his will. He must trust to the jury for that; and a jury is generally hysterical, and guided by its sympathies rather than its reason. If my counsel put forward your husband's antecedents, expatiated on the virtues of his persecuted wife, and the innocence of former victims, with more persuasive eloquence than the prosecutor could manage to employ when holding me up as a wily seducer, who had made the destruction of domestic happiness the one object of his life, they would doubtless acquit me; if the Crown lawyer were the most persuasive, they would convict me. And the chances would be in favour of the latter; for most jurymen are married, and are, therefore, ready to sympathize with a jealous husband."

"Nay, nay, your fears cause you to exaggerate matters. You could not possibly be accused in the way your imagination has conjured up, if the information concerning this mysterious matter proceeded in the first instance from yourself. Believe me—or, rather, do not do that, but consult a good lawyer, and I am certain that he will tell you that the best thing you can do, both for your own safety and your peace of mind, will be to make a deposition, similar in every respect to the story you have told me, before a magistrate."

"I shall be asked why I delayed it."

"And you will reply, because you had not met me, and were unaware of my husband's non-appearance."

"I believe that you are right, madam; and I will make my deposition to-morrow."

"Thank you—oh, thank you, Mr. Peters. Then my trustees will sign for my money.

I must go and prepare them at once; for, do you know, I have overdrawn my account at the bankers'. Good morning, Mr. Peters."

She was gone. The die was cast. Poor Peters never slept a wink that night, yet the History of the Drama grew not. He was too apprehensive of being cast for the principal character of a tragedy himself. But he could not back out now—he must needs make his deposition at once, before an account of the affair was spread abroad in some other way. He would go to Marlborough-street Police-office about the time the night cases would be over, and ask to see—

Rap! rap! Up came a letter in a lady's hand. Mr. Peters tore it open.

"DEAR MR. PETERS—You need not trouble about that matter. I have heard from my husband. You did not hit him, I suppose; at all events, he must have got away very quickly. But he has had a bad fever, and been delirious, and that accounts for his silence so long past quarter-day. If you wish to see me—"

"Wish to see her! Good heavens! Not if I know it. Whew!—what a relief!" cried this most ungallant of men.

ONLY A YEAR.

CHAPTER XIX.

"IT IS THE TENTH OF FEBRUARY."

A FEW days after this, on the evening of the ninth of February, Phillis went, at the earnest solicitation of Lady Dynesford and her daughter, to the opera with them. The Swedish singer, Mdle. Nilsson, had lately appeared, and this was to be one of her nights. The house was crowded, but just opposite the Dynesfords' was a vacant box—the only completely empty one in the whole place. Phillis had lost herself, not in the sweet music of the "Sonnambula," but in a somewhat gloomy retrospect.

"How I wish," she sighed in her heart, "I could be as I was a year ago this evening! I was heart-free enough then—more so than I ever shall be again."

Colonel Dynesford, standing a little behind her, to her left, could see that her eyes, bent on the stage though they were, had become dreamy and abstracted. They were eyes which were not looking, which did not see anything—save her own thoughts, and they seemed sad enough.

"Patience and perseverance will work wonders," said Colonel Dynesford to himself; but even as he thought it, a slight movement opposite attracted those dark eyes, and they turned upon the hitherto empty box a flash of such radiant joy, as Dynesford would have given years of his life to have won; while a quick crimson flood raced across her face, leaving it whiter than before, and her eyes fixed again upon the stage.

In surprise, Colonel Dynesford raised his glass to survey the cause of this unwonted emotion. He saw a gentleman, who had just entered the previously vacant box, before taking his seat, quietly and steadily bestow a careful scrutiny round the rest of the audience, casting never a glance towards the singers. He was rather a slight and particularly well-made man—the evening dress of a private gentleman, trying though it is to a less symmetrical figure, setting off his to extreme advantage. His face was thoughtful, rather haggard in expression; he had a dark or weather-bronzed complexion, a stern mouth, shaded by a drooping moustache, and eyes weary, restless, impatient, with traces around them of anything but a quiet mind or a quiet life.

"I never saw him before," thought Dynesford, as he dropped his glass from Archer Thyrlle. "I must have been mistaken."

But he was presently aware that this newcomer was making quite as free a use of his opera glass as the colonel had lately done towards him. It was impossible to say precisely at whom the glass was levelled; but Dynesford chafed and fretted at such "cursed impudence," for was not Phillis Kyriel well worth a steady gaze of half an hour or so? and she alone of those around her. Phillis never saw that Thyrlle looked towards her. Her head was dizzy, the lights before her seemed to reel and dance; while a great sound, as of many bells, near and far away, clanged in her ears. No wonder she looked white; no wonder she was silent, even when addressed, and that she turned again neither to the right nor the left.

"La Sonnambula" came to an end at length. She might never see him again; he was to sail early to-morrow morning, Gilfred had said. But she dare not trust herself to raise her eyes. It was a hand cold and clammy as ice which Colonel Dynesford drew within his arm as they rose to go.

"Miss Kyriel," he whispered, very anx-

iously, as they stood back to allow Lady and Miss Dynesford to pass with their attendants. "Dear Miss Kyriel, you are ill—faint! Good God! you are as pale as death!"

Her efforts to command herself had been too long sustained. His kind words were more than she could bear.

"I am ill," she gasped. "Oh, I shall thank you so much if you will let me rest here a few minutes alone—quite alone."

She had sunk back on her seat, and in much consternation he withdrew. In a few minutes, having told his mother to send the carriage back for Miss Kyriel, he returned with a glass of sherry, which he insisted she should swallow.

"Will you take me straight home?" she besought him—"in a cab or anything. I cannot talk to-night. The heat—must have been too much for me. No, thank you, I would rather not wait for your carriage, now I am better."

He acquiesced, as he would have done to almost anything she chose to desire; and the throng of people having considerably cleared, he led her away. She was trembling all over, and he could not leave her to stand alone in the crush-room.

"Let me wrap your cloak round you. Now, you won't take cold, will you, if you come a little way down the street? It is awfully cold, but we shall get a cab directly."

Almost supported by his arm she complied, and as they paused to enter a cab, her eyes encountered those of Mr. Thyrlle only a few paces off. How she got in she never knew—Colonel Dynesford must have had a good deal to do with it.

When she recovered herself, she became conscious that her companion held her nerveless hands in his. She withdrew them silently; and as soon as she could trust her voice, she said, gently—

"You must see from this, Colonel Dynesford, that I am not equal to all this gaiety. I am best at home; but I cannot thank you enough for the trouble you have taken for me to-night."

"Nothing is a trouble to me that can be of the slightest service to you. You know—you must know, I would gladly spend my life in trying to please you."

He had repossessed himself of her hand, and she heard, with absolute pain, the tremble in his voice.

"You are not angry with me?" he added.

"No; but I am sorry—more sorry than I can tell you. Don't say anything more to me; and, if you would spare yourself and me unnecessary pain, never speak to me in this way again."

"Don't tell me"—he spoke with much agitation—"that all my devotion—my love for you is hopeless! Anything rather than that. I will wait. Don't answer me now."

"It is hopeless," was the reply—so sad, so full of hopelessness itself, that a strange key-note of sympathy was struck in Dynesford's breast.

"Miss Kyriel, forgive me, but you are yourself suffering—why, I dare not guess. But you are unhappy, disappointed. Could you not—oh, Phillis, could you not, trust yourself to me? There is nothing I would not do to make you happy again. What have I done that you shun me so? I don't ask you to love me—I will wait for that; only give me hope that I may some day claim you—ever so little hope; don't deny me this. I will take such care of you—love you so dearly!"

Phillis hesitated. Would there not be something delightful in being so much cared for, and so truly loved? Would it not soothe inexpressibly her torn and outraged feelings, to know that he would value what had twice been cast aside as worthless—would cherish her, take thought for her? And, as he said, she might love him in time. "She who hesitates is lost." Yet it is not always true, if she hesitates long enough. She heard a church clock strike twelve.

"It is morning now. It is the tenth of February," she thought—"a year ago since I saw him first! No, I cannot! Darling, darling, better your memory free than any man in the world, and my thoughts chained!"

Then she spoke, almost calmly—

"Colonel Dynesford, I have thought it over, and it is impossible. I have always wished to avoid giving you the pain of hearing this."

He was silent a minute, for the pain was keen; then he said—

"Will you tell me if it is any fault in me, Miss Kyriel—or am I too late? I have surely a right to know. Is there some one more fortunate?"

"I will tell you this much, you have been so kind to me. I have been so unhappy as not to care for the love I could get, and to wish for that which I

never shall have. You and your mother have been very kind to me, and I wish I could have made you a better return."

Little more was said except good night, as they were close at home. It was a kind good night, and a kind glance from her beautiful eyes, which Dynesford received; but he knew it was all over. Yet he did not know how much harder to bear would his fate have been had he met Phillis Kyriel a year sooner than he did.

CHAPTER XX.

"THERE MUST SURELY HAVE BEEN SOME TERRIBLE MISTAKE."

"MR. KYRIEL has not come in yet, miss," said the butler, in reply to Phillis's questions; "and Miss Andrews told me that Mrs. Kyriel was asleep an hour ago."

The man withdrew himself; and Phillis, her heart sunk to an unfathomable depth of weariness and despondency, turned into the little chamber which had been Mr. Thyrlé's smoking-room. She despised herself for not being able to dismiss him from her thoughts and affections, as, years before, she had dismissed Hasson Grainger. She forgot that Hasson had proved himself heartless and mean-spirited. A man who could contentedly take his sister's pocket-money—who was the misery and disgrace of his father's life—it was not a difficult matter to hold at his true value.

But Thyrlé! She had never heard of one action of his which was not that of a true gentleman—if even they deserved not the words noble and generous. What was this, even, of which she had lately heard—this story of Hasson Grainger's death? Poor little Grace's letters were full of gratitude to Thyrlé. It was not one of the wretched man's kith or kin—not even one of the few friends he might have had left to him—who had acted the Good Samaritan to him; but it was Archer Thyrlé, whom he had hated, injured, and maligned—the one of all other men in whom neglect might have been almost excusable. And across Phillis's mind floated some sweet, solemn old words—"But I say unto you, love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you."

"Has he not done so?" she thought; "and am I not justified at least in thinking of him as a better and a nobler man than most are? About myself, and what he can

have meant, I don't know what to think—I am weary with thinking.”

She had placed her candle on the old oak escritoire, and was more than half unconsciously passing her fingers in and out of the quaint devices—acorns, bees, and fishes—carved thereon, as she sat leaning her head on her other hand.

“I have thought about it,” ran her musings, “until my brain has seemed unable to clear through the confusion of wonder I have collected. I am so powerless to right myself. I could not have seemed to recognize him to-night. I have pride enough left for that, at least. How ill he looked!—worn, and sad, and tired out. Is it possible—possible that any wretched mistake can have separated us? Why should he look at me so reproachfully? Oh, I can find nothing out by wondering. I will believe that it is all for the best. Don't I know that the only part of my life that I can look back on with real satisfaction has been this last year—these long months, which I have thought as they passed so full of pain and humiliation that they were not worth the living through? I will—I do believe our lives and the courses they take are in the guidance of stronger and abler hands than our own would be to control them.”

She rose up to go to rest, more contented and at peace. As she rose, slowly and with effort, she leant heavily on her right hand, which rested on one of the great acorns carved along the side of the escritoire. A sudden, strange convulsion within its frame caused her to spring back in affright, then immediately to smile at her own nervousness.

“How strange!” she exclaimed, interested by her involuntary discovery.

She approached it again, and found that a little panel had glided back, and revealed the handles of a secret drawer. The key was still in it; and she turned it and drew it open, half expecting to find some musty old deeds or love letters of a century ago.

How little she thought to find a love letter of her own! With a surprise which almost stunned her as she glanced down, her eyes were riveted; for she saw her own name written.

It was on an envelope, in Archer Thyrlé's handwriting—

“To Miss Kyriel, The Manor House, near Hallingford, Knollinghamshire.”

With eager hands she took the letter up.

It was stamped; but had not been through the post. It was sealed, and had not been opened.

She gazed at it, unable to decide what to do, turning it over and over in her trembling, uncertain fingers. At length, having read the address at least a dozen times, she broke the seal. The first words, “Dearest Phillis,” took her breath; but she read through, with racing eyes and burning cheeks—read of the note explaining Thyrlé's sudden absence which the groom had taken “this morning” to the Manor House, and how Thyrlé had hoped for a reply; read he intended to return “to-morrow,” at the latest, but that he would of course write to her again, to say certainly; read of his extreme wish that her friends should be at once informed of “our engagement;” that he was going to sacrifice himself for her and be photographed the next morning, but that he would do anything for her sake, he loved her so very dearly; and that he was hers ever, Archer Thyrlé.

A line was added:

“I hope you won't disappoint me, dear Phillis, about a letter to-morrow.”

The date was the previous year—March the 15th.

“The day after the Hernsley ball!” exclaimed Phillis.

Her excitement was intense, though suppressed, so that she hardly breathed. The letter was read and re-read.

“There must surely have been some terrible mistake,” she murmured. “Can there be more letters here?”

She looked into the drawer. Nothing was there but half a sheet of foolscap paper, but with more of Thyrlé's writing on it. Her senses seemed to reel when she found this was a rough copy of his will, dated on the same day as the letter, “In case of my death before my marriage;” and she found that all his property and the great bulk of his fortune was left to herself.

“What can I do? What ought I to do?”

She hastily left the room, carrying the papers, and went to Gilfred's. To her disappointment he was not there; so she went on to her own, where she found on her dressing table a few pencilled lines from him, saying he was off to Dover for two or three days—he had met an old chum who was just sailing for foreign service, and he was going down to see him start.

TABLE TALK.

THE last new temperance movement has been for a deputation to call upon the Lord Mayor, and draw his attention to the fact that, upon the visit of the Bluecoat Boys to the Mansion House, each lad is given a glass of wine. The chief magistrate received them politely, and promised to call the attention of his successor to the dreadful fact, at the same time stating that refreshments of a more simple character were provided, but that the boys preferred the wine. No one admires temperance more than ourselves, but it is possible to make a good movement ridiculous; and in this case, the deputation has succeeded most admirably. If they really wish to continue their watery weakness, the writer would suggest a powerful sensation novel to run through the pages of their temperance magazine, entitled "The Bluecoat Boy's Blue Ruin; or, the Moral Murder of a Glass of Wine." Herein could be given the yellow-stockinged ruffian's career; how, maddened by the fearful thirst for alcohol produced by the Mansion House port, he broke open the boxes and desks of all his schoolfellows, drinking up Spanish liquorice water, ginger wine, lemonade, and even ink. Growing older in his iniquity, he might forge keys to family beer-taps and skeletons to cellar doors, drinking right and left, till he is sent adrift by his distracted parents, and takes to a life of street vagabondage, in which he goes about writing scurrilous words in chalk upon pumps and drinking fountains; turns public-house breaker, and entering those "hideous haunts of ruin," passes the unholy hours in playing ribald airs upon the beer engine till weary; when, making of himself a cistern, and turning on the taps, he drinketh himself drunk, to be found and handed over to the police in the morning. Punishment follows; but released, he flies to his old pursuits; and, arriving at middle age, he might either, for a finale full of powerful effect, go off by spontaneous combustion, because so impregnated with alcohol that, in passing a naked light, he takes fire and burns blue to a cinder; or, by way of warning, stagger at his last to the railings of Christ Church Hospital, and preach to the boys on the awful effects of drink; and then, after pointing to Newgate, make his way to the steps of the Mansion House, curse its festivities, and die there in the most horrible fit of

delirium tremens ever known. That *would* be a lesson, and would make all future Bluecoat Boys say "Avaunt!" to Mansion House wine, and for ever smile upon the fizzing mysteries of that gingered decoction known as "pop." By the way, if the temperance people would like this story, we can introduce them to a writer: terms moderate, one pound per line, and all rights reserved.

A TALENTED but disappointed young author, of the Hibernian persuasion, after reading the announcement that Dickens's original MS. of "Our Mutual Friend" had been sold in New York for £310, says that, as the novel market is so glutted, and publishers either refuse new works or offer for them the most paltry of prices, he shall, for the future, sell all his novels as original MSS. He is now open to offers.

A GOOD MANY ways have been tried for getting rid of black-beetles. A friend, whose house has been infested with the nuisances, announces that he has discovered how to get rid of them. The plan, he says, is to poison them, and the poison is leather. Here is the way in which he proceeds:—During the evening he sprinkles a little sugar about the floor of the kitchen, and, when the lights have been out for about an hour, he goes quietly down with a candle and the poison—in the shape of an old slipper. The beetles are, generally speaking, sugaring themselves; whereupon he poisons them with the flat piece of leather, the poison being so strong that the beetles become quite flat.

Communications to the Editor should be addressed to the Office, 19, Tavistock-street, Covent-garden, W.C.

Contributions should be legibly written, and only on one side of each leaf.

Every MS. should bear the Name and Address of the Sender.

All Contributions are attentively considered, and unaccepted MSS. are returned on receipt of stamps for postage; but the Editor cannot hold himself responsible for any accidental loss. No unaccepted MSS. will be returned until a written application has been made for them.

Terms of Subscription to ONCE A WEEK, free by post:—Weekly Numbers for Six Months, 5s. 5d.; Monthly Parts, 5s. 8d.

ONCE A WEEK

NEW SERIES.

No. 341.

July 11, 1874.

Price 2d.

JACK'S SISTER; or, WOMANLY PAST QUESTION.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

"NEVER TO NAME THY NAME AGAIN."



CLIFTON! My friend —it's a cursed lie! How dare you repeat it! How dare you listen to such infamous slander!"

With that passionate outburst Jack Leyburn received the first intimation of the name of the man who had, in his showing, beguiled Baby into falsehood and infidelity; and long after, in the silent watches of the night, Enid seemed to hear the hot words uttered over again—to feel the furious gesture with which he shook her from him, and see the towering form, and eyes flaming with utter scorn, as her brother cast back in her teeth the shadow of an imputation on his friend's taintless honour and loyalty. He would not believe it. Nay, he could almost have struck down the sister he loved for having dared—God knows how unwillingly!—to carry such an accusation to his ears; and so far from resenting this contemptuous wrath, Enid only loved him the better for his implicit trust in the man who had been her hero also; only grieved the more that such trust should, by her hands, be shattered into fragments. Right gladly would she have held her peace, and left him to hear the rest from rumour, or Clifton himself, since Baby had, with such good reason, shrunk from "bearding the lion in his den;" but with the incon-

sistency only natural in great mental trouble, Jack caught her by the shoulders as she staggered back from him, and thundered out a command that she should tell all, every word, and let him know the worst. He was almost choking her, in fierce unconsciousness of the strength of his grasp; but Enid, looking up through blinding tears into the livid pallor which had overspread that square, sunburnt face, and the bloodshot, glaring eyes, so bright a moment past, only felt a great reverence and pity for the man thus tortured into cruelty, and clung to the arm that hurt her, as she answered him—

"Oh, Jack," she said, "you're not alone, love, yet. It is killing me to tell you. Be gentle with me; for all your grief is mine. I loved them too."

"Go on," said Jack, hoarsely. "I don't believe you. Mind, I won't believe anything against *him*, but what you've seen with your own eyes and heard from his own lips. I could better disbelieve her—a child, a mere weak girl, than him. But go on, go on, and say what you have to say quickly."

He had released her from his clutch, and dropped into a chair, crouched up in the old, childlike position when in trouble—his elbows on his knees and his face in his hands. Enid knelt down beside him; and there, in the same room, and in the same position as when she spoke to him of her mother's death, word for word told him all.

She was interrupted twice—once by a shiver of disgust, and a muttered oath which told how keenly the family pride was hurt when she spoke of the comments and reprobations of the neighbours; and again when, struck by a fact which she had not noticed at the time, but which both Clif and Baby's words in the corn-field pointed to as true, she spoke of the latter as the leading spirit, the former as only a half unwilling accomplice in their joint treachery. To Enid herself, the first flash of such an idea gave her a joy unspeakable, as lightning

even a little of the disgrace which hung so heavily on her fallen hero's name; but she forgot that Jack might feel less comfort from the suggestion that Baby needed no temptings from another to desert *him*, and, indeed, he stopped her first word of palliation for Clifton with angry abruptness.

"Led away by *her*! What insane humbug! But that is just like a woman—trying to blacken her own sex at any cost. *He* led away! Much you know of his ways with women! Why, he would win and tire of a dozen girls, while another man would be wooing one. My God! that he could not even have spared me this one—my little girl!"

He buried his face again; but raised it almost immediately. The momentary softness did not last long enough to bring even one tear to those hard, burning eyes. Again he interrupted her faltering words—

"Unwilling to take her from me!" I thank him. But you mean unwilling to marry her. He would leave me the body, after he has stolen the heart and soul, would he? Drop her like a toy which he had broken, and go after fresher sport rejoicing! But he shall not! By Heaven, I swear he shall not. She prefers him to me! Well, she shall have him—what there is left of him, at least, after I have chastised him."

It was something terrible to see the poor fellow's passion. The big veins in throat and temple stood out like swollen, purple tubes; and every fibre in his body quivered as he rose, and made towards the door, with unsteady step, and clenched, vengeful hand. Enid flung herself before him. It was a risk, for he looked as if he could have swept her from his path; but the greater danger of his meeting Clif in that desperate mood drove all thoughts of fear from her mind, and she faced him, with her back against the door, and a pale, resolute face which checked even his fury.

"Jack," she said, so sternly that he looked at her, startled—"are you mad? or what are you going to do? Clifton has wronged you, true; but what punishment could you inflict on him which would be great enough to cover that wrong, and not make you even more guilty than he?"

"Is he to go unpunished, then?" he asked, firmly, but evidently wavering.

"Yes," and she laid her hand on his, with quiet strength. "Because he saved your life: Because but for him you would never

have lived to know Baby Delamayne; and therefore, if there were no other reason, every hair on his head should be safe and sacred from your hand."

She had not mistaken the force of that appeal. In a moment when Christian duty or magnanimous reasonings would have given way, that held firm. Jack staggered back to his seat, and covered his face with his hands. When he next looked up, it had the drawn and haggard appearance of an old man.

"You are right," he said, speaking slowly and with difficulty. "He saved my life, as you say. Now he has taken what was dearer than life from me. Good—we are quits. I will never lay a finger on him; never speak one word to him, or give him one look of my own free will, as long as we two live. But the wrong he has done to her is different; and for that he shall marry her. He has dragged her name through the foul mouths of all the scandal-mongers in the place, to gratify his all-devouring vanity. So be it. His own name shall cover hers, and set her so far right with the people who have condemned her. She is here—my guest, and under my protection; and I will not let her go from it wronged or injured by any man. Where is she?"

"Gone to bed," Enid answered, faintly. Girl as she was, she had some faint conception that a marriage with Baby Delamayne would be a bitter and more life-long punishment than any bodily chastisement. "She was afraid—"

Jack stopped her with a short laugh. Such a laugh—so bitter, so hollow and dead! So one might fancy the spirit of Guido Cenci might have laughed when, from the lowest hell, he saw Beatrice coming down the flaming stair to be purged clean in the fiery sea of Purgatory.

"Afraid of me," he said—"me from whom she has never heard a sharp word, who loved her with the one love of my life! Ah, well, I've to thank him for it. He taught her to deceive, and fear comes quickly after that. Never you trust in a friend, Enid. Never love him better than your own soul, if you wouldn't have him stab you in the back as this man has stabbed me."

"Jack," said Enid, bravely, though trembling, "are you not too hard? I know how great your pain is; but Jack—dear Jack, don't let it make you unjust."

"Unjust!" he echoed, harshly. "Are you

too on his side, that he is to be held guiltless?"

"Not guiltless—oh, no; but more weak than wicked in this terrible fall. Jack, try and believe what I, who saw him, cannot help believing. He did not wilfully intend to wrong you; but he was led away by her sweet face, and his natural tenderness for women, till—oh, Jack, think how lovely she is, and how hard it must be to resist her, when even you, who never cared for any one before, lost your heart in one week; and he has been thrown so much with her, and her alone. Blame him you must; but blame me too. It was my fault in part, for I ought to have taken better care; but— Jack! how could I think any one who loved you could need watching?"

"I do blame you," he said, roughly. "I left her in your care; and, by your own account, you seem to have turned her over to him, and him alone. What did you do it for? You were fond enough of the fellow's society when she was not here. What motive could you have had for leaving her to stand it alone now?"

Enid hesitated; and the colour came and went in her face more than once.

"I had a motive," she said, very humbly and falteringly; "but perhaps it was a selfish one. I wish now that I had told you; but I thought it better not. Forgive me if I was mistaken, dear Jack. I suppose I *must* tell you now."

And accordingly she did so, as simply as possible, and far from willingly. That honour, so tempting at the time, was no honour now; and besides, she dreaded infinitely lest the glimpse of a future so dazzling, which would have united the friends closer than ever, and saved all this sin and sorrow, should cause Jack to reflect ungenerously on his cousin as the invariable stumbling-block in the family way. She was mistaken, however. Her brother was too much occupied in the one great loss to heed much else. He heard her out, indeed; then rose with an impatient shrug, and said, in the same harsh, rough voice as before—

"Well—I have nothing to do with your affairs. As things stand, I suppose you have had a lucky escape. A man who will betray his friend is not likely to be true to his wife. That is past, however; and, for the future, you have only one thing to remember—never to utter, or suffer to be uttered, that blackguard's name in my house

as long as I live. Do you hear? And now you had better go away. It is ten o'clock, and I have letters to write."

He opened the door as he spoke, and she had no alternative but to obey. Only on the threshold she paused, and looking up wistfully into his frowning face, said—

"Jack, kiss me once. Don't let this trouble put us apart. If I have erred, I am punished sufficiently in the result; and, anyhow, is not the sight of you in such trouble a heavy enough grief for me?"

He shook his head impatiently.

"Punished! Who wants to punish you?—not I. I don't even know why I blamed you. A wife whose honour is only to be preserved by watching is not worth the watch; and I ought to thank you that this has happened before instead of after marriage. There, go away now. I've no time to waste in talking."

He shut the door; and Enid, left outside in the dark, went quietly away, smothering her great grief while she told the wondering servants that no dinner would be wanted that night, it might be taken down, for their master had had very bad news, &c., &c., such poor palaver as silenced them for the time; after which the poor girl put some wine and biscuits on the slab outside the library door, in case Jack should want anything in the night, and then crept upstairs to bid her aunt good night, and promise to tell her all on the morrow. She had gone through too much to have strength for further explanations just then.

In very truth, Enid's share in that night's misery was far from being the lightest; and Merle, who might have comforted her—Merle, for whose love and sympathy she longed in that hour of darkness, was far away, soiling his honour and entangling his name in the train of a daring actress and her light-lived friends and associates.

"Vanity of vanities, all is vanity." Let us thank God that, not having the gift of the *Diable Boiteux*, we cannot see into either the hearts or lives of those absent ones in whom we trust most fondly. Not one in ten would bear such an inspection: not one in twenty be willing to submit to it; wherefore, better to say with A. H. Clough—

"This being so, I hold it well

To take life as I find it—

The pleasure to take pleasure in;

The pain, try not to mind it."

Clifton Gore passed that night in the open

air. He went to the railway station in the evening, with the intention of following Jack as he had promised; but in the act of taking his ticket, his eye was caught by a portman-teau, labelled "J. Leyburn. Jersey to London—via Southampton," which was lying in the little office; and the collector answered his hasty word of inquiry by the tidings that Jack had arrived by the five o'clock train, and had left his bag to be called for.

Without a word, Clif flung his ticket aside, and left the station. He had lost the one chance remaining to him of confessing his fault to the friend he had injured. By this time all was known. By this time he had lost his friend, his good name—all that life held most dear to him. And for what? A girl he neither loved nor respected—hardly liked, indeed, now that he had had a glimpse of her in her true colours. A girl who had meshed him through his own folly and vanity, and through the boyish pique which had hardened his heart awhile against the friends she was deceiving for his sake.

He knew better now. Wandering up and down and in and out of the dew-drenched moonlit avenues in his father's park—now crunching through beds of dry, rustling fern; now startling a little cock-tailed rabbit to his hole, or starting himself at the loud whirr-r-r of a pheasant rising from the brake under his feet, and fluttering away among the bushes; now almost hidden by the impenetrable foliage of some copse denser than the rest; and now emerging into the broad, white blaze of moonshine, sleeping like liquid silver on every open spot, Clifton walked all that summer's night. And as he paced to and fro, the mirage which had been before his eyes seemed to fade away, and the truth to stand forth afresh, clear and distinct as the stars glistening here and there through faint silver-grey cloudlets in that high, blue vault of Heaven above. Once again, as before, he saw Jack, the trusty friend and brother of his life—always faithful, always kind, always ready to fight his battles against the whole world, and cry his praises above every other; the man who, he knew, would have shed the last drop of blood in his defence, and been proud to do it; the man whom he loved so warmly—whom in sheer, thoughtless idleness he had wronged, and whose hand he might never more clasp again; whose path might never more lie alongside of his, as long as their two lives lasted. He thought of him;

and then he thought of Enid, his queen and his love. Oh, God! if she had but loved him, this would all have been averted. Baby Delamayne's fairy face and flattering follies would have been less than the dust of the earth to him then, and Jack nearer and dearer than ever. He did not blame her now. His own downfall was making him strangely humble. Even Merle, whom he had so disliked, seemed worthier of Enid than himself; and he smiled bitterly as he thought of his conceit in being angered with her for choosing the poorer and the plainer man. He had actually scorned her for it, and thrust her from her pedestal; while all the time her clear eyes were doubtless seeing through his littleness and vanity, and condemning him. It was a bitter draught; and the poor young fellow writhed and clenched his fists hard as he thought what a poor, shallow fool he had been. Led away by a girl's golden hair, beguiled by honeyed speeches and well-contrived opportunities into a flirtation which had culminated in Baby's avowal that morning. Bah! he could not think of her—he dared not, lest he should hate her; and, somehow, he dreaded doing that. Perhaps some voice whispered that all was not yet over between them; that the seed he had sunned and watered, he must gather to shelter in his own barn; that, though the wilful sin was hers, he must bear the penalty; and that, after all, the girl must care for him.

Poor boy! Ultra-chivalrous by nature, that one idea gave her a claim to tenderness and protection, even in the heart that revolted against her as he recalled her duplicity, her vulgar sneers at his saintly Enid; and saw again the pure, grave face, looking down on them in such pitiful, unconscious majesty. He would not think of Baby. Bound or free from her, he could not feel less wretched while knowing himself degraded in the eyes of those he loved, and utterly unable to remove that degradation. For nothing he could do would alter that, or undo that which was done. Once again, as so often before, the forbidden fruit had been plucked; and now the angel with the gleaming sword stood at the gates of Paradise, driving the sinners forth. "The world was all before them where to choose;" but Eden's gates were shut—they could never enter there any more.

The sun had risen from a bath of pure gold into a rosy, opal sky, fading into pale

green in the western horizon ; the flowers had opened all their dainty cups, and were spangling the earth with a mosaic of brilliant colours and varied tints ; even the birds had finished the last jubilant chorus of their morning hymn, while Cliff still wandered over the broken and wooded ground where he had passed the night, and wished that the days of fighting were not over, that so Jack might call him out, and put a bullet in his worthless life. *He* would not fire. Nay, he felt he could have welcomed the ball which would have freed him from this load of remorse and shame—have stood still even under a blow which would (as Enid had said) have put the striker somewhat more on a level with himself. It was nearly nine o'clock before he went into the house; and as he entered, the first thing he saw was the Leyburns' servant with a letter in his hand. He took it eagerly, saw that it was from Jack, and tearing it open, read his fate in ten lines within.

A RUSSIAN CRECHE AND CON- VALESCENT HOME.

WHILE spending a few weeks in St. Petersburg during the past summer, the invitation of a friend and admirable cicerone led us to devote a day to the pretty little village of Oranienbaum. A short trip down the Neva to Peterhoff, and a drive of some six miles through artificial but varied park scenery, brought us to the palace grounds, where the great Catherine (II.) once shot and hunted in man's attire, while the Grand Duke, her husband (afterwards Peter III.), was amusing himself with the mimic army of Holsteiners which ultimately proved the chief source of his unpopularity and of his disastrous fall.

The palaces at Oranienbaum and Peterhoff deserve more than a passing notice, connected as they are with some of the most stirring incidents in Russian history; but we must leave them now, our present object being to exhibit a phase of Russian civilization less known, and perhaps less appreciated, than the magnificent display and sumptuous expenditure which are held to characterise the capital and the Court of the Czar.

Passing the palace of Oranienbaum, half hidden in wood, and entering the village of the same name, our calèche drew up before some massive wooden doors, which were

soon thrown open in answer to our summons, and the scene which met our eyes was one not soon to be forgotten. The transition so sudden and so striking, from the dreary and deserted monotony of a Russian village street, to the happy, active life which we found within, could not fail to make the blood run quicker through our veins, and to bring back memories of happy English scenes which we had certainly not expected to see repeated here. The gate was opened to us by a sister of St. Croix, whose quiet dignity and sweet face were a fitting introduction to this abode of loving, watchful care.

Her own charge, she told us, was the convalescent department; but the eager greetings of the children gave ample proof that her sympathies were not confined to the limits of her special care. We at once found ourselves the centre of a merry, laughing group of bright-eyed children, whose chubby cheeks and frank, open looks, spoke volumes of the care and attention bestowed upon them. Games of various kinds were going on within an enclosure of considerable size, and in the centre was a Russian swing, on which careful little nurses of seven or eight were holding mere babies, while children of older growth held on to either end and added materially to the Babel of merry sounds.

The swing in Russia is an institution adapted to every age and every capacity. We wonder it has never found favour in English households. The simplicity of it is charming: a mere seat—or, rather, standing board—suspended by a double cord at either end to a stout cross-beam. Babies' safety chairs may or may not occupy the centre; whilst the accommodation at either end is limited only by the strength of the supports or the space for foothold. After spending some time in watching the children at their play, we passed along a short gravel walk to a substantial wooden building, constructed, as are all Russian country houses, of massive pine baulks crossed at the ends, and in this case finished with the greatest nicety and care. A curious and eager group of little ones accompanied us as we entered the large central hall, devoted to meals and at times also to play. The furniture here and throughout the building was of varnished deal—substantial, simple, and thoroughly good.

Here we were introduced to the charm-

ing German lady whose thoughtful management is conspicuous in the smallest details of this most excellent institution. She had been trained, she told us, "in a German conservatorium for the work of teaching, had the excellent system of Froebel at her fingers' ends, and felt fully competent for the work before her, otherwise she would never have dared to face the responsibility. All came easy, however; and no one could fail to be happy and to do her best who was privileged to labour in such a cause."

Under her guidance we visited the several class-rooms, which opened out of the great central hall. Fine, lofty rooms they were; well lighted, with ample ventilation and cheerful aspect. Scripture prints were frequent on the walls, and all the modern helps to learning. The large slate in one contained a half-worked sum; in another mere babes were engrossed in work, and seemed already far advanced in habits of industry and application. It was curious to watch the little fingers pricking, almost mechanically, with a needle the simple figures traced upon the pattern cards. In the room for writing and more advanced work, the desks all faced one way, and the light was arranged to fall in such a manner as to have satisfied the critical requirements of Dr. Liebreich himself. The forms, too, were all supplied with backs, and seats so contrived as to adjust themselves with little trouble to the tiny legs of the pupils. The dormitories, which we next visited, were roomy and well ventilated; no crowding of the neat little iron cribs. Order the most precise, and a cleanliness which could be felt, reigned everywhere.

We have visited many noble and well-managed institutions in England, but in this respect have never seen it surpassed. No less than eighty children of all ages, from mere babes of eighteen months up to girls of eight, are received daily into the Crèche during the summer months; yet crying, we were told, is seldom heard, and certainly during our visit none but cheery faces and the merry sounds of laughter were met with wherever we turned.

The day's routine begins at eight in the morning, when the children assemble from their several homes. A bath is provided for each, and a complete change of clothes; it being a prime object at the crèche to instil at once the doctrine that "cleanliness is next after godliness." All traces of the dirt

and misery of a Russian home are stripped off at their entrance, and left behind for the day, to be resumed only when the hour of their return comes round. The hair of every new-comer is cropped close, as a very necessary precaution; and when these transformations have been effected, we may safely say that the mother would scarcely know her own shaggy-maned, booted, and castaned urchin, in the clean and bright-faced boy, clothed in a simple uniform of grey, and already beginning to master the rudiments of letters. Meals are taken in the central hall, and we were fortunate in seeing the little ones at tea. There were no luxuries; but all was good and wholesome, as we ascertained by direct experiment. What struck a stranger most, however, was the absence of anything approaching stiffness or restraint. The wee bairns were playing baby tricks with their tin mugs, and the tables were not more free from sops than they ought to be on such an occasion.

Accidents were not severely visited, and any childish difficulty met with ready assistance from the teachers or from their elder companions. It was truly a rule of love; and we were not surprised to learn from the lady in charge that the great difficulty of the day was to induce the children to return to their homes when the hour of six was sounded.

Such is the Oranienbaum Crèche — a school where the first seeds of cleanliness, discipline, learning, and morality, as well as the groundwork of a higher faith, are laid patiently and lovingly by skilful and willing hands. It is not easy to calculate the good which even this one institution may do for Russia. As successive generations pass under its refining and elevating influences, they must carry with them into the world the habits and the knowledge they have acquired here, and, as men and women, will become the centres of a higher civilization than they find around them. Such leaven is sorely needed among the ill-educated peasantry in Russia, and we heartily wished the teachers Godspeed in their noble and useful work.

Under the same roof with the Crèche, but completely separated from it, is the Convalescent Home for patients from the Children's Hospital in St. Petersburg. The sister of St. Croix was now our guide, and it was no slight addition to the pleasure of

our visit to watch the tender interest as well as the skilled and critical knowledge which she displayed in the several cases under her charge. Questions were asked us, too professional for insertion here, but showing a knowledge of medicine, and surgery too, which few of our English nurses, even the most highly qualified, possess.

No sooner had we entered the garden than we were surrounded as before, but this time by faces somewhat wearied by sickness and pain.

Many sad histories were there which we learned from the nurse—one which we were surprised to hear from the patient himself, a bright-faced English lad of thirteen, who, with warm expressions of gratitude for the comforts around him, told us of seven long years of previous sickness in this northern land.

The wards of the Convalescent Home contain forty beds, and nothing could exceed the order and comfort which everywhere prevailed. Few drugs are used—ample space, efficient ventilation, the most scrupulous cleanliness, and a good, healthy air being relied upon for giving health to the wasted frames, and instilling new life into the drooping spirits. We could not help feeling that, to many of those around us, this short sojourn in the calm retreat of Oranienbaum would be as an oasis in the dreary desert of their lives—the one bright spot from which, in after-years of toil, they would derive encouragement and support.

There were the fever wards, too, which, as far as we are aware, are unique in their completeness.

The ideal of English sanitarians is here seen realised: walls of tile, so accurately fitted that the joints are barely visible, and present no absorbent surface; a floor of hard and polished wood, which is equally impervious to the poison of disease. Further remarks might carry us into medical details of little interest to general readers; but, from what we have said, it may be gathered that the institution at Oranienbaum is no ordinary one. Expense has not been spared; every endeavour has been made to combine the best architectural skill with the utmost thoroughness of construction, an organization the most complete with the most tender and loving care.

But this brief notice of an admirable charity would indeed be incomplete without some mention of the lady to whose

public spirit and Christian love this and so many kindred institutions owe their existence and support, the Grand Duchess Catherine Michael. Her Imperial Highness was not at Oranienbaum when we were there, but we were assured that a day scarcely passes when she is at the palace without a visit to the home; and the genuine loving way in which the children spoke her name was a convincing proof of the personal interest which she takes in their welfare.

Russia has many noble men and women, whose names the historian will prize and jealously guard in the coming years—one, above all, of a man whose first act of power was to set his people free; but there are others whose unrecorded acts of love are felt in the poor man's home, whose silent influence for good strikes deep and far; and among these no name will live longer or more lovingly in the hearts of the Russian people than that of the munificent founder of the Oranienbaum Crèche and Convalescent Home.

THE CASUAL OBSERVER.

AT BILLINGSGATE.

FOUR o'clock a.m., and Billingsgate cool and wet enough to keep its fish fresh were it there for days. But now comes the rumble of a railway van, and then of another, and another, and soon Great Northern, Great Eastern, and the rails of South and West are on the land side pouring in their tribute; while in muddy Thames a tier of smacks is as busily disgorging, from wet and slimy hold, "trunks" of soles, and pads of turbot, brill, and plaice, which are shouldered and borne over bending, springy planks to the wharf.

The dull, desolate look of the place soon departs; knots of men seem to spring up here and there; this blank space has been filled by sturdy porters with a hundred mackerel pads, just taken from a Great Western van; that corner, with its stands, is wet, dirty, and piled up with wretched-looking cod, fishy of eye, and bruised of nose, with the marks of the killer's club yet dented in.

There is hurrying to and fro now, and every turn round the market shows something fresh unpacked. Fresh, indeed, for these trays of flounders are leaping, winking, and flapping their tails; and as for the huge boxes of eels—well, perhaps we should not believe in their freshness did we not see

them writhing and shuddering in wavy vibrations from head to tail.

One, two, three, four hills of brawny red shrimps here, with men sifting them, to separate the large from the small. Two hills of pinky prawns are on the next stall; and a little farther on a blackened chaos of lobsters, sparring, tail-flapping, with protruding eyes, but harmless, for their claws are tied.

Pad-baskets are being opened now, and men of the costermonger type of countenance cluster round to gaze upon the arrow-like fish known here as "mickaral" and "mackereau."

Here's a perfect bank of silver hue, and another, and another, for the salmon are now unpacked from their icy beds, and glisten in their scaly armour. These very kings of fish seeming to look scornfully down upon their rich, corpulent, white-vested turbot friends of a few yards farther—noble fellows, that your West-end fishmongers shall charge in the bill at a guinea, perhaps two guineas each, but now set up stiff, slimy, dirty, and edgewise by the score, in great baskets, such as are used by the familiar laundress. A few more steps, with no further accident than a box on the ears by a cod's tail, a thrust in the back by a sole trunk, and a "By yer leave" from a lobster bearer, and we are gloating over the spotted trout; but only the next moment to be peering at the delicate red mullet, few, ruddy, and precious, seeming to have caught the sunset of the warm western waters, and retaining it still, even though they have been brought to market, each separately wrapped in newspaper.

Eight feet long, and of good girth, with his rows of limpet-like excrescences, here lies a pointed-nose sturgeon, side by side with baskets of pale, silvery, delicate-looking whiting, stiff and stark in their freshness, but not yet manipulated into biting their tails. John Dorys here, not at all gilded, but dark, sullen, and goggled-eyed; steely bladed gar-fish, with their spiky snouts; discontented crabs, whose bound-up forceps seem longing for only one nip; skate, with their long tails and wing-like sides; cod, again, thrown down, flopped down, and looking more disconsolate and out of water than any fish in the market; orange-tinted gurnard, solid, angular fellows, able in their new sphere of inaction to keep to their normal position; dingy haddock; diamond plaice, red-spotted and loved of Hebrew; whitebait, fragile and

fair; and again, a little farther, fine Irish mackerel, large, duller of tint, and brought to market in large boxes, packed in ice.

The unpacking and landing go on; the smart fishmongers from the West arrive, to form a crowd with those of lowlier pretensions, and the owners of barrow, stall, and truck. Salesmen, white-aproned, wooden-clogged, and ledger-bearing, begin to look round; but, while waiting for more tribute from the sea, they chat or refer to that ever-appearing tankard filled with some hot preparation, probably the early purl advertised on board and card, but at all events potent in removing the Nova Scotian look brought on by the early morn, for the month is dull, cold, and disconsolate of aspect, and the thermometer, from the early hour, has not yet risen so very high.

Pending the selling business, we descend one of the flights of steps to the lower market, devoted to shell-fish, and at once conclude that the dearness of oysters is a myth; but at the same time obtain the key to the reason why whelks and winkles are so plentiful in our crowded courts and lanes; for here they are, gritty, sandy, and stacked in sacks and bags, huge tubs and barrels full, and their buyers waiting; for only round the corner are the great cellars, with the coppers hot, ready for the boiling, at a small price per bushel, for the convenience of the humble dealers.

But it is now six o'clock, and the din overhead grows fast and furious. Throned on high, and surrounded with fish, salesmen with their acolytes are shouting to collect an audience of buyers, each bent upon impressing dealers that his peculiar species of fish is the most important.

"Tur-butt-butt-butt-butt-butt," roars one in a husky voice.

"Soles-sole-sole-sole-sole," another.

"Cod here, cod here, cod-buy-ers, cod-buy-ers, cod-buy-ers," is sung musically a little farther on.

And then, by auction, boxes gorged with soles are knocked down to the principal dealers—more fish constantly arriving by land and water.

Cod are sold by the lot of from half-a-dozen upwards, and turbot by the basketful, fifteen or twenty oval tray-like fellows of all sizes, dirty and slimy, standing up on edge. In another part the "pads," or little hamper, of mackerel are being sold at a fixed price, each basket supposed to contain half a hun-

dred of sixty; but this is no rule, for when the mackerel run very fine the pad may be filled by forty; but even here the old strawberry-pottle custom rules, and the larger fish are placed at the top.

The costermonger type is strong here, and "How much for this here pad, Frank?" or, "What are yer going to let me 'ave that ere pad for, Frank?" is addressed to a Dun-dreary-looking gentleman of supercilious air. Here come humbler buyers still to the shrimp hills, such as this grey, bent old man, with a little basket, to invest a shilling in a measureful that looks like half a peck; while, as he shakes them over the bottom of the basket to spread them well, they look so few that the seller good-humouredly throws in a couple of handfuls more, and away goes the poor old fellow with his shilling stock-in-trade.

This stout, red-faced lady, with the flat basket and damaged bonnet, is undoubtedly the very woman who declared that eels were used to skinning; she can be none other as she stands in front of an iron pail-shaped scale, into which, as fast as he can catch them, a salesman's acolyte throws in the writhing creatures; but he does not catch them fast, and more than one darts amongst the bystanders' feet. They will be less nimble, though, when this lady buyer has them amongst her sand; while, as to the skinning, surely a Hindoo, if shivering here, and dreaming of the transmigration of souls, would choose by preference to be one of the portly turbot, standing so placidly on edge, half shut of lip, and raised of eye.

Fast and furious goes on the selling: sixteen shillings given by a flat-nosed gentleman in cords, the proprietor of the barrow fifty yards away, for sixty mackerel; a sovereign by a stout woman for six variously sized cod; ten pounds by yon red-faced West-ender for four "trunks" of soles; fifty-two shillings for the basket of turbot and brill by the thin man, who must have bought before "butt" enough for all the dinner-parties in London.

The whiting and haddocks sell fast; the gurnards seem to hang; but that man who bought the four largest salmon, silvery, gorgeous beauties that would send a flyfisher into ecstasies, must be the one we have seen behind a flannel apron in Bond-street—or, stay, was it in Arabella-row? There can be no doubt about this dark aquiline lady paying for the plaice pad, filled so full that

the fish are confined against the open lid with string: she is undoubtedly the same who vends the smoking slices of fish fried in oil, at one penny and twopence each, down Whitechapel way when the gas is flaming.

Fast and furious goes on the selling; but more fish is ever arriving by rail, unfortunately for the senders, for the best buyers are fast getting stocked, and the late arrivals, and the previously unsold, will go to the little peripatetic dealer, and become treats in the humbler homes of the crowded East. The selling has gone on for a couple of hours, and though porters have been rushing here and there with clammy loads, to where carts line the streets and lanes, so much has still been delivered that the piles, hills, boxes, pads, trunks, and trays of fish seem undiminished; but already carts are speeding in all directions, and soon their loads will be washed and spread upon marble slabs in tempting guise, side by side with limpid ice and verdant fennel.

There is an odour of boiled lobster already from a grating, and scarlet as Grenadiers a basket full of those but a little while before black and biting, is seen upon a dealer's arm. The prime of the market is over, undoubtedly, for in answer to a tremendous appeal for bids for that "nobby trunk of soles," a salesman has received such an offer that he has, with a sham display of disgust, thrown his ledger into the pocket of his white apron, vowing that it "aint the price of a trunk of offal"—offal being the term applied to the plaice and odds and ends of fish taken in the trawl-net with those of nobler breed.

ANGUISH IN PRINT.

IN THE STRICTEST CONFIDENCE.

TEAR THE TWENTY-THIRD.

"A BEASTLY DAWG."

FOR a few moments after I woke I could not make out what made me feel so heavy and dull; of course, it was partly owing to their ringing that stupid bell down in the hall so early, for fear we should have a morsel too much sleep; but all at once, as upon other occasions, I remembered all about the last night and poor Achilles; when, of course, the first thing I did was to rush to the window and throw it up, to try and catch a glimpse of the scene of the last night's peril, when the first thing my eyes

rested upon was that horrid Miss Furness taking her constitutional, and, of course, as soon as she saw me she must shake her finger angrily, because I appeared at the window with my hair all tumbled. I never saw anything like that woman. I always did compare her to an old puss, for she seemed as if she could do without sleep, and always got up at such unnatural hours in the morning, even when the weather was cold and dark and wet, when it seemed her delight to go out splashing and puddling about in her goloshes; and somehow or another, she never seemed to catch cold as anybody else would if they had acted in the same way. It must have cost her half her salary for green silk umbrellas; for James generally managed to spoil every one's umbrella when they were given him to dry, and Miss Furness never would use any but the neatest and most genteel-looking parapluies, being the only thing in which she displayed good taste.

Of course I had a good look out as soon as I was quite ready to go down, when I could see that the flower bed was a good deal trampled, while one of the bushes was quite crushed down, so that I knew there would be a terrible do about it as soon as it was noticed.

"Well, is he there?" said Clara, "or is it only his pieces? Do make haste down, and run and secure his heart, before they pick him up, and put him on a barrow to wheel away."

"La!" said wide-open-mouthed Patty, staring; "he would not break, would he?"

"Oh, yes," replied Clara. "French gentlemen are very fickle and brittle, so I should not at all wonder if he broke."

"Better break himself than the jam pots," I said, spitefully, when Clara coloured up terribly, as she always did when the Signor was in any way alluded to; for though I did not like to hurt her feelings about the jam when she was shut up, of course she had not been at liberty long before she heard all about it. I know it was mean on my part to retaliate as I did, but then she had no business to speak in that way; for it was too bad to make fun out of such trouble. However, she must turn quite huffy and cross, and go down without speaking; for some people never can bear to be joked themselves, even when their sole delight consists in tormenting other people.

I could not but think that poor Achille

had escaped unhurt, though at times I went through the same suffering as I did on the morning after the discovery in the conservatory; and really, when one comes to think of it, it is wonderful that no suspicion ever attached to either Achille or myself over that dreadful set-out. Breakfast over, I seemed to revive a little; though I must confess that what roused me more than anything was Miss Furness finding out that I looked pale and red-eyed, and saying that she thought I required medicine.

"For you know, Miss Bozerne, a little foresight is often the means of arresting a dangerous illness; so I think I shall call Mrs. de Blount's attention to your state."

"Oh, please, don't, ma'am," I said. "I assure you that I feel particularly well this morning."

But she only gave one of her self-satisfied smiles and bows; when in came the tall footman to say that the gardener wished to speak with "missus."

"Missus" was not there, so the footman went elsewhere to find her; but the very mention of that gardener brought my heart to my mouth, as people say; though I really wonder whether that is true—I should like to know. Then I had a fit of trembling, for I made sure that he had found poor Achille, lying where he had crawled, with all his bones broken, in some out-of-the-way corner of the garden; perhaps, possibly, to slake his fevered thirst in my favoured spot, where the ferns, and the miserable fountain that never played, grew green and damp beneath the trees.

But I could not afford to think; for just then the door was opened, and Mrs. Blunt stood with it ajar, talking to the gardener in the hall, and of course I wanted to catch what he said; when, just as if out of aggravation, the girls made a terrible buzzing noise; but I heard enough to tell me that it was all about the past night, and I caught a word here and there about bushes broken, and big footsteps and sides trampled, and so on; while, as a conclusion to a conversation which had roused my spirits by telling me that poor Achille had not been found, Mrs. Blunt placed a terrible damper upon all by saying—

"It must have been the policeman, gardener; and he must be spoken to respecting being more careful. But for the future we'll have a big dog, and he shall be let loose in the garden every night."

I could have rained down tears upon my exercises, and washed out the ink from the paper, when I heard those words; for in imagination, like some gladiator of old, in the brutal arena, gazed upon by Roman maids and matrons, when battling with some fierce wild beast of the forest, I saw poor Achille struggling with a deep-mouthed, fang-toothed, steel-jawed bloodhound, fighting valiantly to have but a minute's interview with me; while, dissolving-view-like, the scene seemed to change, and I saw him, torn and bleeding, expiring fast, and blessing me with his last words as his eyes closed. Then I was planting flowers upon his grave, watering them with my tears, and plaiting a wreath of immortelles to hang upon one corner of the stone that bore his name, ere I departed for Guisnes to take the veil and shut myself for ever from a world that had been to me one of woe and desolation.

"Oh, Achille! beloved, martyred Achille!" I muttered, with my eyes closed to keep in the tears, when I was snatched back to the realities of the present by the voice of Miss Furness, who snappishly exclaimed—

"Perhaps you had better go and lie down for an hour, Miss Bozerne, if you cannot get on with your exercise without taking a nap in between the lines."

I sighed—oh, so bitter and despairing a sigh!—and then went on with my task, sadly, sorrowfully, and telling myself that all was indeed now lost, and 'twere vain to battle with fate, and I must learn to sit and sorrow till the sun should shine upon our love.

Such a wretch! I'm sure no one ever before possessed such a horrible, mongrel creature. Instead of being a large, noble-looking mastiff or hound, or Newfoundland dog, it was a descendant, I am sure, of the celebrated Snarleyow that used to bite poor Smallbones, and devour his dinner. It was one of those dogs that you cannot pet for love, because they are so disagreeable, nor from fear, because they will not let you; for every advance made was met by a display of teeth; while if you bribed it with nice pieces of bread, they were snapped from your hand, and the escapes of your fingers were miraculous. I should have liked to have poisoned the nasty, fierce thing; but, of course, I dared not attempt such a thing. And what surprised me was Mrs. Blunt being able to get one so soon, though the

reason was plain 'enough—the wretch had belonged to a neighbour who was only too glad to get rid of it, and hearing that Mrs. Blunt wanted a dog, jumped at the chance, and I know he must have gone away laughing and chuckling. We used to call the horrid wretch Cyclops, for he had only one eye; but such an eye! a fiery red orb, that seemed to burn, while the wretch was as big almost as a calf. I knew that poor Achille would never dare any more adventures now for my sake; and it did seem such cruel work, for a whole fortnight had passed since I had heard from or seen him, for when the lesson was due after our last adventure, there came a note from Mrs. Jackney's saying that Monsieur de Cochonet had been taken ill the night before, and was now confined to his bed.

Only think! confined to his bed, and poor Laura unable to go to him to tend him, to comfort him, and smooth his pillow, at a time when he was in such a state of suffering, and all through me—all for my sake! I'm sure I was very much to be pitied, though no one seemed to care; while as for Clara, she grew unbearable, doing nothing but laugh.

Oh, yes, I knew well enough what was the matter, and so did two more; but, to make matters ten hundred times more aggravating, that lean Miss Furness must go about sighing, and saying that it was a bilious attack, and that England did not agree with Monsieur Achille like la belle France; and making believe that she was entirely in his confidence, when I don't believe that he had done more than send word to Mrs. Blunt herself. And then, as if out of sympathy, Miss Furness must needs make a fuss, and get permission to take the French class—she with her horrid, abominable accent, which was as much like pure French as a penny trumpet is like Sims Reeves's G above the stave.

"Oh, yes," she said, "she should be only too happy to take the class while poor Monsieur Achille was ill."

And, one way and another, the old fright made me so vexed that I should have liked to make her jealous by showing her one of Achille's letters.

But, as I said before, we had a dog in the place; and, oh, such a wretch! I'm sure that no one ever before saw such a dog, and there it was baying and howling the whole night through. The very first day he came

to inhabit the smart green kennel that Mrs. Blunt had had made, he worked his collar over his ears and got loose, driving the gardener nearly mad with the pranks he played amongst the flowers; when who should come but poor meek, quiet, innocent, tame Monsieur de Kittville, when the wretch made at him, seizing him by the leg of his trousers; but how he ever did it without taking out a bit of his leg I can't make out, for his things always were so dreadfully tight; and there was the wretch of a dog hanging on and dragging back, snarling the while, and the poor little dancing master defending himself with his fiddle, and shrieking out—

"Brigand! Cochon! Diable de chien! Hola, ho! Au secours! I shall be déchiré! Call off de tog!"

And at every word he banged the great beast upon the head with the little fiddle, till it was broken all to bits; but still the dog held on, until the gardener and James ran to his assistance.

"He won't hurt you, sir," said the great, tall, stupid footman, grinning.

"But he 'ave hurt me dreadful," cried the poor dancing master, capering about upon the gravel, and then stooping to tie his handkerchief over his leg, to hide the place where the dog had taken out a piece of the cloth, and was now coolly lying down and tearing it to pieces. "I am hurt! I am scare—I am fright horrible!" cried poor Monsieur de Kittville; "and my nerves and strings—oh, my nerves and strings—and my leetle feetle shall be broken all to pieces. Ah, Madame Bloon, Madame Bloon, why you keep such monster savage to attack vos amis? I shall not dare come for give lessons. I am ver bad, ver bad indeed."

"Oh, dear, oh, dear! how can I sufficiently apologize?" exclaimed Mrs. Blunt, who had hurried up, and now began tapping the great dog upon the head with her fan. "I am so extremely sorry, Monsieur de Kittville. Naughty dog, then, to try and bite its mistress's friends."

"Aha, madame," said the poor little man, forgetting his trouble in his excessive politeness and gallantry—"mais ce n'est rien; just nosing at all; but I am agitate. If you will give me one leetle glass wine, I shall nevere forget your bonté."

"Oh, yes, yes—pray come in," said Mrs. Blunt.

And then we all came round the poor,

trembling little fellow; and although we could not help laughing, yet all the while we pitied the good-tempered, inoffensive little man, till he had had his glass of wine and gone away; for, of course, he gave no lesson that day, and I must chronicle the fact that Mrs. Blunt gave him a guinea towards buying a new instrument.

"But, oh, Clara," I said, when we were alone, "suppose that had been poor Achille?"

"Oh, what's the good of supposing?" said Clara, pettishly. "It was not him, and that ought to be enough."

"But it might have been, though," I said; "and then, only think!"

"Think," said Clara, "oh, yes, I'll think. Why, he is sure to have him some day."

"Don't, dear, pray," I said.

"And then," continued Clara, "he'll fight the dog like a lion, and kill him as King Richard did the lion."

"Oh, please, don't tease," I said humbly; "I wonder how he is."

"Miss Furness says he is better," said Clara.

"How dare Miss Furness know?" I said, indignantly.

"Dear me! How jealous we are!" she said, in her vulgar, tantalizing way. "How should I know?"

And, for the daughter of a titled lady, it was quite disgusting to hear what common language she made use of.

"I don't believe that she knows a single bit about it at all," I said, angrily; for it did seem so exasperating and strange for that old thing to know, while somebody else, whom he had promised to make—but there, I am not at liberty to say what he had promised.

"You may depend upon one thing," said Clara, "and that is that your Achille will not be invulnerable to dogs' bites; though, even if he is, he will be tender in the heel, which is the first part that he will show Mr. Cyclops, if he comes. But you will see if he does not take good care not to come upon these grounds after dark—that is, as soon as he knows about the dog. By the bye, dear, what a dislike the dog seems to have to anything French."

"I'd kill the wretch if it bit him," I said.

Clara laughed as if she did not believe me.

"I would," I said; "but I'll take care somehow to warn him, so that he shall run



no such risks. For I would not have him bitten for the world."

"Of course not—a darling!" said Clara, mockingly.

And then no more was said.

But matters went unfortunately, and I had no opportunity for warning poor Achille, who was attacked in his turn by the wretch of a dog—who really seemed, as Clara said, to have a dislike to everything French; while, by a kind of clairvoyance, the brute must have known that poor Achille was coming. For, by a strange coincidence—not the first either that occurred during my stay at the Cedars—the creature managed to get loose, and lay in wait just outside the shrubbery until *he* came, when he flew at him furiously, as I will tell you.

A HOLIDAY IN THE NORTH.

VI.

SOON after two o'clock, we left the farm, in Mackintoshes and driving rain, led by the farmer, and accompanied by Thurdur, with candles in his pocket. We rose sharply to the top of the ridge behind the farm, where we were nearly blown out of our saddles by the gusts of wind, and our fingers became so wet and numb that we could scarcely feel the reins. However, we were soon down again on the other side of the ridge, where we found a broad stream of comparatively recent lava, hemmed in between the hills on either side, the very counterpart of a glacier in every point, save those of material and motion. There was the same evident filling up of an old valley by the stream, crevasses, blocks of lava piled up in fantastic shapes, and everything to remind one forcibly of glaciers seen elsewhere. Here there was scarcely any vegetation, except the thick whitish-grey moss before mentioned. This moss is most beautifully soft and yielding, and sometimes almost knee-deep.

For some distance we rode alongside the stream, and warmed ourselves into life by keeping up a good pace; then we crossed the lava by a track sometimes scarcely discernible, and after about an hour and a half's ride, pulled up abruptly at the foot of a little mound of lava, whereon sat two huge ravens, ill-omened looking birds, which croaked and looked at us askance.

Dismounting, the ponies were tied two and two together, to prevent their straying,

the head of one being tied to the tail of the other; and we proceeded to the mouth of the cave. This, or rather one of them (for there are several mouths), we found close to a broad archway under our feet, which appeared to have fallen in just here, for the floor was heaped with broken blocks of lava.

"But this," said the farmer, "is not our entrance. We must go farther on."

And he led the way across the lava to another similar opening, about half a mile off. Here we divested ourselves of our Mackintoshes, got out the candles, and descended, climbing cautiously over the broken lava down into the entrance of the cave. At this point there were two mouths, one running in the direction from which we had come, and the other taking a southerly course. It was into the latter that we made our way; and after stumbling down to the floor of the cave, we were rather startled to find our guide standing there in about four inches of water, which covered a sheet of white ice. However, we could not be deterred by the water; but, as we advanced, the ice beneath began to crack in a most ominous manner, and we began to remonstrate with the guide, saying that we had no idea of being drowned in a cave, in the dark, and underneath ice. But he assured us it was all right, and we followed on cautiously. Presently we got out of the water, on to clear, dry ice, which we found was not, as we had imagined, merely a crust, but solid ice, apparently to the bottom of the cave. As we advanced we became more and more enchanted with the beauties we saw. The arched roof sparkled with innumerable crystals of ice wherever the light from the candles reached, till it appeared covered with diamonds. The walls sometimes were a sheet of pure ice; sometimes thick, handsome pillars of ice stood in rows in front of the lava wall; and sometimes, again, there were lovely frozen streams, and fountains, and stalagmites in the utmost profusion. The floor, meantime, was chiefly clear ice, but very irregular; and it required considerable care to prevent getting some ugly falls in the uncertain light of the candles. Here we had to climb over a heap of broken, fallen lava; and there we came upon a smooth, level floor of ice some twenty or thirty yards long, covered all over with stalagmites of ice of a most regular form, and varying in height and size from a few inches to several feet, which looked like a giant skittle alley,

or a table set all over with fairy water bottles.

At last we reached a small cairn, beyond which our guide said there was nothing more to see, though the cave extended a long way still; and here we left coins and our names, as others had done before us, and returned the way we had come. We made the best of our way back to the light, but, nevertheless, it took us a quarter of an hour to reach the mouth of the cave, by which I judge that we must have penetrated it to a length of about half a mile.

We hurried back to where we had left the ponies, the two ravens flying from rock to rock just in front of us; and remounting, made our way back to Kalmannstunga at a round pace, only stopping once to pick up the carcase of a sheep, which had been killed by a fox. The brute had apparently done little else than tear its throat open, and, I suppose, drink the blood; and the farmer took the dead body on his saddle bow, and rode on as if there was nothing there. We mentally resolved that if they should offer us any mutton on the following morning we would decline it.

On reaching the farmhouse again, we took possession of the guest-room as our quarters for the night, as the weather outside precluded all idea of a tent. A little, narrow room it was, with boarded walls, and a little close-shut window, with a table underneath it; a chair on either side the table, and a narrow form down each side the room. That was all; and when our beds were spread out, the whole floor was occupied.

This, we decided, was the time to open the attack on our luxuries; and accordingly our dinner led off with the very hottest mulligatawny soup (preserved) I ever tasted, and finished up with a soda water bottle full of real port wine brought from England, and some dried prunes for dessert. After this we were enabled to lie down on the (very) hard deal boards which formed the floor, in tolerable spirits, notwithstanding the gloomy prospect for the morrow.

All night the rain continued, and when we rose the sky looked as threatening as ever. But start we must, so we told Thurdur to get the horses ready, while we ate our breakfast and packed up the baggage. This was soon done, and we sallied forth, hoping for an immediate start. Vain hope!—one of the horses was missing, and must be found

before we could leave. The farmer and our boy were in search of it; but of course no one could tell how long we might have to wait; so there was nothing for it but to lean against the door-posts, abusing our luck and watching our saddles get soaked through, as the ponies stood with their tails to the driving rain. In about an hour, however, the truant appeared, much to our relief; and fastening his pack on his back, we mounted and turned our faces southward.

We were soon on the lava plain below; and after fording a cold, swift glacier stream, up to our horses' girths, we had a good gallop across the wet grey sand, which continued for about a mile and a half. Here it was bounded by the Geita, another glacier stream, running in several channels, some of which were so deep that it was impossible, even by the most fantastic contortions, to keep our feet out of the icy-cold water. On the other side, a steep, broken slope of slimy yellow clay rose abruptly to the heidi above, which we reached after a good deal of slipping and sliding; and after halting for a short time, cold and wretched, on a sort of swamp, to give the horses a rest, we entered on the hard work of the day. This was Skulaskeid, the road so called because in ancient days a man named Skula, flying from his pursuers, was actually bold enough to make his horse canter along it. We wondered at his audacity, and picked our way among the sharp, broken lava blocks at a foot's pace.

We were now at a considerable height (what height I cannot judge, as I had not the heart to unfasten my Mackintosh to look at the barometer), and were still rising, while the wind swept the rain in blinding sheets in our faces, and rather across our track. On our left, we caught occasional glimpses of the snow-fields of Geitlands Jökull; on our right all was mist, which here and there broke to show us a patch of snow, indicating the presence of Ok; while stretching away before and behind us was a howling desert of stones, small and large, which gave one such an idea of desolation as is difficult to imagine. We began to understand that what Thurdur had said about the "stones flying in Kaldidalr," might not be altogether without foundation.

Still we went on and on, up and up, at foot's pace, our heads thrust down on our

breasts to avoid the driving rain, every drop of which felt like a needle on the face; our trousers like sponges, with the water running down into our boots; our Mackintoshes in rivers; and hands, feet, and legs cold and numb, thinking we should never reach the summit. I believe we did reach it eventually, but it was difficult to say when; for after going pretty nearly level for some time, we found ourselves descending again slightly, here and there crossing broad patches of snow, some of which were almost like small glaciers, and so dropping gradually down into Kaldidalr, "so called," as the author of "A Summer in Iceland" naively remarks, "because it can be very cold there." It can—we found it most uncommonly so. Sometimes the rain would stop for a while; but just as we were congratulating ourselves that the wind, bitterly cold though it was, was beginning to dry us, we saw vast clouds of rain again sweeping across the track ahead of us, and we were soon as wet as ever again.

As we came down into Kaldidalr we got a better view of the glaciers and peaks of Geitlands Jökull than we had yet had. At this its southern extremity it is more broken and picturesque than farther north; and the broken glaciers and white snow, and the deep blue lava slopes and peaks, set one another off to perfection. We agreed, however, that very fine weather indeed would be necessary to induce us to go through Kaldidalr a second time.

We now descended rapidly, till we reached the Kerling—a cairn put up to mark the junction of tracks to Thingvalla and the geyser. We took the former, and rode on at a good pace and with lightened hearts, hoping before long to see the welcome green roof and outbuildings of a Bær, where, if we felt so inclined, we could remain for the night; and we now began to think that we probably should feel so disposed.

On inspecting the map, we had found, about six hours' ride from Kalmannstunga, a place where three tracks met, called Brunnar. Here were some little dots which we took to represent farmhouses; and when at last we rode up to a plot of grass (the first worthy to be called such that we had seen since leaving Kalmannstunga), which Thurdur pronounced to be Brunnar, we looked eagerly round, thinking our journey's end was reached, and asked him where was the Bær?

"Bær!" he replied; "there is no Bær here."

And such was indeed the fact. The dots on the map, which we had taken for houses, turned out to be merely springs, beside which we dismounted in silence, and picked our way over the swampy ground to a slight rise, where we sat down disconsolately, and attacked sausage and biscuits with feelings of savage hate. While we were thus employed the rain began afresh, and we lunched in misery, watching, with murderous thoughts, two wild swans on the tarn below us. We were too much out of spirits, however, to get our guns out, and we soon started again, thinking it was less wretched to keep going than to wait longer.

At least four long hours' more riding before we could pull up for the night! As we went on, however, the thoughts of comfortable quarters at Thingvalla, and the fact of getting so much farther on our way, began to cheer us up again; and though as wet as ever, it was now much warmer, and at last we found ourselves riding along almost merrily. On our left lay the gigantic swelling of Skjaldbreid (Broad Shield), with its dome of snow, while we rode along the edge of a lava stream which had issued from its crater; and on our right was a high table land, or heidi, on the other side of which lay Hoalfjord and Skorradalr.

Up to this point, notwithstanding the rough nature of the country we had traversed, we had had no fall or accident of any sort (though some pretty narrow escapes), and it was reserved for me to open the ball in this respect. We were riding down a steep, stony slope in single file, and I was the last of the party, when my noble steed showed a disposition to gallop down the rest of the hill on to the plain below. I did not like the look of things, and tried to restrain his ardour. But he tossed up his head, and, without paying any further attention to the track, plunged forward at full speed. The most natural consequence was that before he had gone a dozen yards, he stumbled over a large stone, fell forward, and after a long slide with me on his back, eventually brought up among the small boulders, with my leg under his shoulder. He immediately rose again, and trotted off after the rest of the party. I at once jumped up, and lifted up my voice as loud as possible, as I did not like the notion of being left there alone; and one of my companions,

turning at the noise, found my pony quietly trotting on behind the rest as if nothing had happened. He was immediately secured and brought back to me, none the worse; and, rather to my astonishment, I found that I was the same, with the exception of a few bruises and a little stiffness in my leg the next day.

Crossing a small river, we entered on a valley, a good part of which was occupied by a lake which has no visible outlet. It had evidently formerly stood at a much higher level, as there were two or three lines of "high water mark" clearly discernible along its banks, and we rode along the fine lava sand which had once formed its bottom. At one end it was supplied by the stream we had just crossed, and at the other its waters were held back by a high embankment of almost artificial appearance. Over this we rode, and descended into a dark and narrow cleft, which gradually opened out into a green valley, leading on to the lava stream which runs down from Skjaldbreid to the lake of Thingvalla.

Since leaving Kalmannstunga, the only living creatures we had seen were a solitary curlew in Kaldidalr and the two wild swans at Brunnar. Now we saw sheep, and, afar off, some people, and felt that we were returning to the regions of civilization. We were now riding on the modern lava stream, and before long saw the blue waters of Thingvalla shining brightly in the distance. This gave us fresh energy; and in another hour we suddenly dived down into the northern end of the celebrated chasm of Almannagja, and rode along its bottom until we came nearly to the point where the river Oxará leaps into it from the plain above in a splendid waterfall. Here we left it by a break in the lower wall; and here, too, the second fall took place, the last pony setting its foot in a hole, and the rider being shot over its head. In this case, however, it took place on turf, and we others knew nothing about it until we were comfortably settled in our quarters at Thingvalla, where we arrived in five minutes more, thoroughly tired with our ten hours in the wind and rain.

The road by which Thingvalla is most usually approached is that from Reykjavik, by which nothing is seen of the plain of Thingvalla until the rider is suddenly brought up on the brink of the precipice of Alman-

nagja, and looks down on the green plain and rushing river below. Here the traveller is obliged to dismount, and lead his horse down a sort of stone causeway, almost a staircase, which has been built in a gap of the precipice, and which is overhung by huge blocks of lava, which look as though the least thing would bring them thundering down about his ears. On reaching the bottom, he fords the Oxará, on the other side of which stand the little wooden church and parsonage of Thingvalla.

We dismounted by the church, and, as we were unloading the horses, the pastor came out to meet and welcome us. We had often heard of conversations being carried on in Latin, and now was the time when we must make the attempt ourselves; for the pastor immediately began to talk to us in that language. Ours were miserable attempts; and gradually both sides lapsed into silence or single words, followed by signs.

He presently left us, and we proceeded to divest ourselves of our wet garments; and before long the interior of the church presented a most extraordinary appearance, being strewn in all directions with various articles of clothing, saddles, boxes, kettles, food, guns, fishing rods, &c., in a state of exquisite confusion. It was rather a curious sight at first—these worldly proceedings in a church; but we felt that we must do at Rome as the Romans do, and were set pretty much at our ease when the pastor came in, with his pipe in his mouth, to see how we were getting on; and then went and got some provisions out of a cupboard, under the communion table, where he kept candles, tobacco, &c.

The rain had at last cleared off, and things were looking brighter; and, after consuming our dinner in the little church, we turned out to smoke our pipes and look about us. But we were very tired, and it was getting late, so we were not long in making the two mattresses with which the pastor had supplied us go as far as possible among five, and were soon sleeping the sleep of the tired.

We left a man outside mowing the meadow below the church at eleven p.m. He had been mowing ever since our arrival, and at about half-past one in the morning I looked out and found him still hard at work, intent, I suppose, upon making the most of the daylight summer nights.

ONLY A YEAR.

CHAPTER XXI.

"I WILL SEE HER."

SLEEP was out of the question that night for Phillis. Never had she been in such a state of feverish, restless excitement. If she could but see Thyrlé for five minutes, to know the best or the worst! And yet, after all, this unsent letter proved little or nothing, though it suggested much. It might have been put aside—how could she tell whether by accident or design? Could Hasson Grainger have possibly had a hand in it, she would have suspected any treachery. She believed him to have been unscrupulous, as he had in all things been reckless. The letter proved nothing; for it was not to be imagined that Thyrlé would not have written again—once, surely, if not oftener; and he must have received her letters. Then, again, what was this about the note which had been sent by a groom to the Manor House? How the memory of that day of hope, of watching and distress, came back to her! She could recall so vividly the weary hours she had spent, with her heart sickening at the sunlight on the Cross-roads Hill; and, with a strong force of recollection, came back to her the perfume of the violets she had gathered for him, and which faded in her breast that long spring day.

There must have been some third hand in the matter. Some light would be shed on it all, if only she could get this letter into Thyrlé's hands before he left England. Had Gilfred only been here, she would gladly have told and entrusted all to him. Colonel Dynesford, she knew, would do anything for her; but how could she ask him to do this, even if she could summon him in the middle of the night—three o'clock in the morning? She could not, would not, trust the precious letter into a servant's hands: it might have been negligence or baseness on a servant's part before which had cost so much.

All through the winter night she reasoned, conjectured, planned; and early, very early—for did he not sail to-day, might he not already be on board?—before all the lamps were extinguished, or the dim grey daylight showed clearly the wet pavement heaped with dirty, still unmelted London snow, Phillis stole down the stairs of the silent

house, and let herself out into the street. She had clad herself as thickly as she could, both for warmth and disguise, and she was never a girl to mind a shower or a blast; yet she had never before looked on so dismal and chilling a scene as a London square in the early winter morning, or felt so lonely and weak, as she started on her errand in the raw, biting air, over the dreary, blackened snow. She had never stood alone on a London street before, far less at such an untimely hour, in such bitter weather, and with such an enterprise before her. She had written a short note to Mr. Thyrlé, in her mother's name (she had long been accustomed to write invitations, &c., to save Mrs. Kyriel trouble, and she knew he was aware of this), asking him as a particular favour to call—no matter how early—before he left for Algiers. She (Mrs. Kyriel) had something she anxiously wished to say to him, and she hoped he would not refuse her request.

Slowly, in spite of her eager wish to hasten her steps—for she was faint and sick with intense and prolonged agitation—she made her way eastward as far as St. James's-street.

She was perplexed there; but among the few wayfarers yet astir she found a policeman, from whom she gained directions for her future way. Yet she more than once again became confused, and applied for help; for her mind was bewildered with hope, anxiety, and doubt. At length she reached the imposing edifice of the Charing Cross Hotel, and drawing her thick veil closer than ever over her face, and striving hard for composure, she ascended the steps. A somewhat surly porter met her in the hall, and regarded her suspiciously, as he inquired her business.

She asked, with quivering lips, if Mr. Thyrlé was still here.

She was told, in reply, that he (the porter) was not to be expected to know all the gents in the hotel. What did she want?

In dismay, Phillis now found she had forgotten her purse. Her heart sank. Was she, after all, to be defeated by the incivility of a man like this? People were coming into the hall, too; and she shrank like a criminal from observation. Two men passed into a room, and another, attired in a thick overcoat, took up a position on the mat at the hall door, and stood looking at the dreary scene without, finishing his cigar.

Phillis spoke very low and hurriedly, her heart throbbing painfully quick.

"I have a note for him. It is very important: it must be delivered at once. Will you do it for me?"

"Not for nothin', young wumman; it aint likely."

"Come to his house—Mr. Thyrlé's house—in Grosvenor-square, any time to-day, and inquire for Andrews, the lady's-maid, and you shall have five pounds, if you do this."

Phillis was desperate, and overshot her mark. If she had said five shillings, or even ten, it would have appeared probable; but that a lady's-maid should fling five-pound notes about her in this style was more than a sensible man could credit.

"Likely story!" he remarked. "Will yer stand me half a crown now?"

"I have no money with me," returned poor Phillis, almost in tears; "I forgot it. But, indeed, I promise—"

"Come, come, that'll do," said the man, rather roughly; "you had better be off before the perlice arrives, with yer five pounds, and yer letters, and yer Mr. Thyrlés, and gammon, at this time o' day."

Guiltily enough to confirm the man's opinion, Phillis, with trembling fingers, drew her veil closer, and turned to go, in silent despair.

But the last emphatically spoken sentence of the conversation had been audible to the gentleman near the door; and the sound of a name—especially if not a very common one—invariably attracts the attention and interest of its owner. And this was Mr. Thyrlé, who had just returned from his club, where he had been playing *écarté* all night, after having seen the girl he loved leave the opera in the care of Colonel Dynesford.

He now threw away the end of his cigar, and intercepted the woman, who was, though with lingering, uncertain steps, approaching the doorway where he stood.

Phillis felt so keenly that she had risked her last chance, and failed. She thought she had never cared so much for him as she did now she had lost him. She would have given all she possessed for a kind word from him—for one glance in the face she thirsted to see again! And here, with a new hope in her heart, with a clue to some treachery or mistake in her grasp, she was to be disappointed on the very threshold of success. It was so hard, so bitter to think

that a paltry half-crown would have done what she would have given much to accomplish.

"Do you wish to see Mr. Thyrlé?"

Like a knife to her heart, went the sudden joy of hearing his voice—seeing him before her, when a moment before she had so utterly despaired. Yet, true to her instinct of concealment, she did not betray herself by speaking; though she felt—the once proud Phillis—that she would have been glad to throw herself down at his feet, and sob her sad, blank life away.

"My name is Thyrlé," he continued—"Archer Thyrlé. Do you want me?"

He scarcely looked at her, merely seeing that she wore a thick, woollen veil; but, as the morning was bitterly cold, it was no unusual protection, though it completely masked the features of the wearer. He thought the hall porter's voice had sounded anything but civil; and he had the dislike, which is an instinct of protection in the natures of some men, to hear a woman, however poor or objectionable, harshly or rudely treated.

She held out to him the letter; and although he asked, "Is any answer required?" as he took it, she turned away quickly, without speaking.

"What a fool I am!" exclaimed Thyrlé angrily to himself—not for the first time that morning; for the turn of her head, the outlines of her figure, even the very step of the messenger, as she walked away from the hotel, flashed a thought across his brain which, for an instant, made his heart beat quickly. Something about this woman brought to his mind only too distinctly the queenly grace of Phillis Kyriel; and though he sneered at his folly, yet his eyes pursued her longingly as far as they could distinguish her.

"Upon my soul, I have thought so much about her, that I fancy every other woman I see must look like her."

He went up to his sitting-room, where preparations were made for his breakfast. There was a bright fire, and he wearily threw himself into a chair before it; and his thoughts went away to that morning, a year ago. He remembered the very scent of the cool, fresh air; the eager, buoyant paces of the horse he had ridden; and, above all, the proud beauty of the face which he saw that day for the first time, which had smiled on him till his brain had turned, which had

blushed at a glance or a murmur from him—and from him alone. He remembered how her lustrous eyes had filled with tears at his hasty words at the Hernsley Ball; how the gay, fair face had paled when he leapt the gap over the Heldon Quarry; and he started to his feet with a fierce curse on the wiles and the beauty which had thus striven to rob him of all rest and happiness, and had so well succeeded. His eyes fell on the forgotten note, which he had let fall unheeded to the floor. He took it up, scarcely knowing that he did so. Strange feelings of surprise, curiosity, anxiety, took possession of him as he looked at it. He had seldom seen Miss Kyriel's writing—once or twice she had written him a note for her mother. Could this be?—He eagerly tore it open.

He was right. Though it was in her mother's name, it was not in her mother's weak, uncertain hand. It was a coldly worded note, though earnest. He recognized, as he thought, what Mrs. Kyriel had dictated, and what Phillis had supplied.

"'Most anxious to say something'—'As a particular favour'—'No matter how early.' None of these are from Phillis, I'll swear. What the devil do they want? Does Miss Kyriel require a little more Vere de Vere practice on me, to keep her hand in for Colonel Dynesford? Yes; I know. By heaven!—to tell me Phillis is going to marry Dynesford—to ask me to the wedding! Yet I should rather like to see her just now, if only to show her I can easily survive even this."

Thought after thought chased impetuously through his brain. At one moment he decided to go, and brave the worst that fate could bring him—the certainty that she was about to marry. Again, he resolved to keep to his first purpose, and sail for Algiers at ten o'clock. Then he thought of her as he had seen her last night at the Opera—so pale, so still and proud; and, as he remembered how her lips had once pressed his hand—those haughty lips, which would not say she loved him—a storm of passionate regret, a determination to see her once more at all risks, overpowered him. He even caught himself looking wistfully and tenderly at the paper he held, on which her white hand had rested; then, filled with sudden contempt at his soft-heartedness and credulity, he flung the letter into the fire.

"But I will see her—I must see her!"

was the hungry cry of his heart; while all his stubborn pride, his common sense—a dozen instincts and reasons, forbade him to do so.

He passed his hand distractedly across his brow.

"I must have been drinking too much," he muttered, with the curious attempt at self-deception we all practise sometimes.

He was unwilling to own to himself that Phillis Kyriel had still the power to cause such a wild tumult in his breast; he would rather account for it on any other grounds. He sat down again, and rested his aching head between his hands. He was surprised and angry at his unwonted fit of vacillation, and set himself doggedly to think and to decide. Yet it took him a long time. Colonel Dynesford figured often in his meditations. Instinctively, he had recognized in him a rival; and the recollection of the colonel's handsome face, high position, and distinguished name turned the tide against obeying Mrs. Kyriel's wish. Then crossed his mind the strangely graceful figure, the stately, yet easy movements of the maid who had delivered the note to him, and which had so forcibly reminded him of what he had most admired in the Beauty of Knol-linghamshire.

"I will go!" he exclaimed, half aloud. "I will end this weary shadow of hope, whatever it may cost me to do it. I will go and hear the worst. I have stood things hard to bear in my time, and I will take this like a man—if I can. At least, I am prepared."

Truly he was. He armed himself in a whole panoply of pride and reserve; thus hiding effectually the doubts which were gnawing at his heart. He had taken his passage in the vessel about to sail; but now, glad to be able to seal his last resolution, he rang the bell, and gave orders for his luggage—which had been sent down to Gravesend to be put on board—to be brought back again, as he was unexpectedly detained in England, and should not be ready to sail, perhaps, for some time.

Phillis felt she had much reason to congratulate herself on the success of her expedition; but she had another difficulty to encounter, on which she had as yet hardly bestowed a thought, which was to prepare her mother for Mr. Thyrlé's possible visit, and to offer to her some plausible excuse

for having written to ask him to call, as well as a reason for the anxiety expressed in the note "to say something to him." Phillis had been too intent on one thing at a time to calculate this difficulty as she should have. She had, vaguely it is true, thought of suggesting to her mother that it might be proper to thank him for the use of his house; yet it seemed to her now that it was an insufficient and poor excuse for the urgency of her expressions. At last an idea flashed into her mind like an inspiration. Mrs. Kyriel had not been told that Thyrlé had lent Gilfred the money for the purchase of his company; indeed (so accustomed were her children to spare her any annoyance they could), she had never been allowed to know that money had been required for the purpose of his promotion. Now, Phillis would instil into her mind the extreme exigency of the position, Gilfred's great troubles and failures, and the ready and unsolicited help he had received from Mr. Thyrlé. Phillis knew how partial Mrs. Kyriel was to Thyrlé, and that this would be just the sort of thing she would be grateful about; and she would be thoroughly able, Phillis knew, to express her thanks gracefully and well. Bright with the happy idea, she sought her mother's apartment. Mrs. Kyriel had passed an uneasy night, and was weak and in pain; yet she listened with great interest to what her daughter told her, and said she was glad Phillis had written to ask Mr. Thyrlé to see them before he left, and she hoped to be well enough to come into the drawing-room in the afternoon. Phillis spent a morning of the most racking suspense. She thought he might arrive at any moment, and she knew he might never come at all. Then if, her mother should not be able to see him? If Gilfred only had been here! But everything seemed to go wrong. Indeed, she thought so, when, after having been furtively watching from the drawing-room windows for above an hour in the afternoon, she heard the servant announce—

"Lady and Miss Dynesford."

The great shock of expectation which she had felt when the door opened passed away, and though she was deadly pale, she came forward with her usual manner to greet her visitors.

"Dear Miss Kyriel, you look so ill to-day," exclaimed Lady Dynesford, in a tone of real kindness and anxiety. "Maurice told me you were rather faint last night—

that you had felt the heat oppressive. The house was certainly very much overcrowded, and I'm afraid you are not so very strong, my dear. You take too much charge on yourself about your mother."

Phillis had time to recover herself, and answered, pleasantly—

"Oh, it is my nature to look white. I don't often have any colour. And as to my mother, I sometimes think I ought to be grateful to her for being an invalid, and so providing occupation for my idle hands."

"You should get married," said Lady Dynesford, rather gravely. And Phillis laughed, but there was little mirth in her laugh. Then Miss Dynesford asked about some jacket or mantle which had pleased her, and of which Phillis had promised her the pattern. Phillis summoned her maid, who produced the article in question, and the two girls' heads were bent together over it, when Phillis, for the second time, felt all the blood fly suddenly from her face, and for the moment her sight grew misty; for the door again opened, and she heard the name—"Mr. Thyrlé."

If any possible hopes of reconciliation had been in her mind, her first glance in his face dispelled them for ever. Pride came to her aid: she was at least qualified to meet him on his own ground, and give him score for score. She returned his cold and haughty bow with interest, and, with studied politeness, introduced him to Lady Dynesford and Miss Dynesford.

Thyrlé had felt savage enough to see intruders of any description in the room; but when he heard the name—when he took in at a glance the bit of satin and lace on the table, and the evident interest which both Phillis and her friend took in it—he said to himself, bitterly—

"I was right; and this is some of the wedding finery."

THE FIRE ESCAPE MAN.

SAYS he, "Fire!"
Says I, "Where?"
"Next street!" "Wire—
We're there!"
Running wheels,
Red sky,
One feels
Fit to fly.
Burning house,
Blinding smoke;
No nous,
Windows broke.

In, cries—
 Loud shrieks :
 Ladders rise,
 No one speaks.
 Axe in hand,
 Window's gained :
 Can't stand—
 Courage drained.
 Bring two
 Down flies,
 To save more
 One soon tries.
 Down again—
 Crowd roars ;
 Quite plain,
 Falling floors.
 Roof goes—
 Flash and spark ;
 Blue, rose,
 Orange—dark.
 Engines near,
 Water, steam—
 Clank—"Beer!"
 Helmets gleam.
 Called brave ;
 People cheer—
 Saving four,
 Death near.
 Fire? Run—
 What odds?
 Duty done—
 Life's God's!

TABLE TALK.

THOSE who have children, and who wish to give them the mental powder grammar, carefully hidden away in jam, should purchase Messrs. Houlston's little work, "Grammar-land," a production most ably and characteristically illustrated by Mr. Frederick Waddy, the clever artist whose initials and vignettes have for so long a time embellished the numbers of this periodical, and also brightened the pages of last year's Christmas number—"Ship Ahoy!" It may not be out of place to say here, that the same artist and his fellow-worker of the pen are suffering seriously from the heat, while trying to dream of snow, ice, slush, the bitter winds, the blacks and fogs of London streets, and all to produce another Annual for the coming (six months off) season.

"HAIL, COLUMBIA!" as the Yankees say, only here we must add Market; for we read that "Baroness Burdett-Coutts has addressed a letter to the City Corporation, which was read at the meeting of the Court of Common Council, and in which her ladyship offers to take back her gift of Columbia Market, as the Corporation are unwilling to make use of it. The letter was

referred to the Markets Committee, with a view to the reconveyance of Columbia Market to her ladyship." The market has been a most unfortunate place. Grandly Gothic, and first designed to make sunshine in a desolate region, it has been proved that the people of the neighbourhood prefer the shade. Instead of liking to buy in a neat, clean place, they prefer the noise and dirt of the streets; and, from the beginning, the Baroness's benevolent scheme has fallen flat. It is rather a harsh thing to say, as regards the inhabitants thereabouts, but pearls have been thrown before swine, and they have left them for the garbage. The last scheme—that of making a new fish market of Columbia—has also fallen flat. We have read that buyers at the ports will not send their fish to the market, nor will salesmen and purchasers come there to trade. The above quotation is the last news of the place. If we might venture to suggest a plan to Lady Coutts, we should say, Listen to no further advisers, take no fresh consideration, nourish no more schemes that may prove Utopian; but do a good and grand action—one whose fame will give eternity to the name of Coutts. Make no arrangements for the relief of the poor in the ordinary way, and lay yourself open to imposture and injury, with the vexation of seeing the money expended diverted into wrong channels; but turn the great place at once into a hospital, endowed with a sufficiency of funds to provide the best medical and surgical skill, able and plenteous nursing attention, clean beds and airy rooms and wards; and, above all, let there be no letters of recommendation needed—no favouritism to gain admission, but let the pass-key for the suffering poor be the urgency of the case. It may be argued that there are hospitals in plenty. There are not—there is always a sad arrear of disease and injury awaiting to be brought up; and if this is done, the Baroness will have the pleasure of seeing her grand institution a place where the misery and suffering of the district are ever being assuaged, and a work going on that is lasting in its great effects. It has been said that the poor shall never cease out of the land: experience teaches that the saying is perfectly applicable to the sick.

Terms of Subscription to ONCE A WEEK, free by post:—Weekly Numbers for Six Months, 5s. 5d.; Monthly Parts, 5s. 8d.

ONCE A WEEK

NEW SERIES.

No. 342.

July 18, 1874.

Price 2d.

JACK'S SISTER; OR, WOMANLY PAST QUESTION.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

CALYPSO'S GROT.



MAKES you so abstracted to-day? And why do you insist on coming to see me when I don't want you, and when it isn't my hour for seeing people, and when you've nothing to say? Don't you know that I can't bear people who

sit and stare at me mumchance?"

Miss Dynevor was speaking. It was about half-past two on a very sultry afternoon; and she was seated in her own drawing-room—a small, but very pretty one—gay with lace curtains and gaudy silk damask, overladen with statuettes, pictures, and ornaments in Dresden china, ormolu and oxidized silver, and overflowing with stands, bowls, and vases of flowers, which filled every corner with beauty, and made the air heavy with their mingled perfumes. Rather a close room too, as London rooms are apt to be in hot weather—the ceiling low, the door narrow, and the tiny strip of garden behind, shut out by stained windows, and in by high houses; but, all the same, a wonderfully enticing and comfortable little apartment in which to dawdle away an idle hour, taking in languid, lover-like fancies with the heavy, Eastern fragrance of the flowers, and

feasting your eyes on the hostess's lovely English face.

Exquisitely fair the latter was looking to-day; free from paint, the eyes gleaming like dark jewels, and a faint tinge of colour in the oval cheeks. Miss Dynevor looked more charming than ever; the glossy chestnut hair waving back from her temples and gathered in a rich, loose knot behind, from which one long curling lock fell serpent-like over the pearl-grey silk, which fitted like a glove to the full yet slender figure, and was relieved only by a broad sash of dusky crimson silk, knotted at the side, and a rose, crimson too, and half buried in the ruffles which only partly shaded that strip of her pretty white neck which the dress left bare. She was sitting—not lounging: long as it seemed since her girlish days, managers often told her that she had not yet learned to lounge perfectly—in a low easy chair, leaning rather forward, and toying with the leaves of a half-cut periodical in her hands; while her companion, a slight, dark, gentlemanly looking young man, sat very near her on the little amber satin sofa, and leant forward also, so as to bring his head even closer.

"You haven't opened your lips six times since you came in," Miss Dynevor went on, tapping one too be-ringed hand petulantly with the mother-of-pearl paper knife held in the other, and frowning in a way which brought her delicate, dark-lined brows together in a little inverted arch, and made her face more fascinating than before.

Merle Kinnardson thought so, at any rate. He drew a long breath before he answered, smiling—

"One forgets to talk in looking at you, Minnie. Do you know, you are a thousand times more beautiful off the stage than on!"

"You seem to forget something else," she said sharply, and paying no manner of attention to the compliment. "How many times have I told you that I won't have you call

me that—by my old name? Take care for the future, or it will be 'exit M. K., left front.'"

And she laughed a little saucily; though the frown remained—a real one this time. Merle laughed too.

"I humbly beg your pardon, belle dame sans merci; but please you remember it is not easy to call old friends by new names. Suppose I were to ask you to call me Mr. Snooks!"

"Why not? I will, if you like. Snooks! H'm, I think it fits you very well when you look so sentimental. One would think you were in love. Are you?" (very abruptly).

"Present company excepted?" Merle asked.

"Of course. Every one who comes here is in love with me. *Cela va sans—sans—* Bother! I never can pronounce French words. Tell it me, Merle."

"*Cela va sans dire*," he suggested, eyes and face glowing for a moment beneath the soft, caressing tone of that last word. "But you pronounce it very prettily, Minnie—like a baby trying to speak plain."

He had called her Minnie again; but this time she let it pass unheeded; and answered with sudden, soft brightness—

"Do you remember lending me Théophile Gautier's poems, and reading one to me, long ago? I didn't understand a word of it at the time—Miss Simpson's French lesson once a week wasn't up to *that*; but I got out my old grammar and dictionary, and sat up half that night finding out the words one by one. I thought they sounded so grand—like music on an organ—when you read them. Wasn't I a fool?"

"Dear Minnie! no—you were an angel," Merle answered, very low.

"And when I had got hold of the sense of the thing, it was just something awfully stupid and improper—or, rather, what I thought improper in those days. Oh, yes, Merle, I was an awful little fool; but I aint quite so bad now, thanks to you—and others."

"Don't say that, child, it hurts me—and you don't mean it," Merle said, flinching as though the girl's mocking little laugh had been, in truth, a whip to sting.

She looked at him saucily, then patted his head with the paper knife, and smiled.

"Poor little sing-sing, it s'an't be hurt zen. There, now I'm good, so tell me why you

looked so cross when you came in this morning."

"Did I? I wasn't aware. Stupid letters on the mind, I suppose. In fact, I think I came here on purpose to drive dulls away by your fair ladyship's presence."

"Thanks. What sort were the letters? 'Little beels'?"

"Oh, dear, no—I'm used to *them*."

"What then? I thought they were the worst sort of billet-doux; but, to be sure, you always were in a chronic state of hard-up-edness; so, I suppose, like the eels, you're used to it."

"I ought to be. This, however, was nothing that would interest Miss Dynevor; only some muddle in a cousin's affairs."

"Not the cousin who was at Exeter with you? The big fellow with the honest face who pulled stroke in the O. U. B. C.?"

"Yes. Why?"

"No reason; but I saw him *once*, just a month or so after I came to London. I suppose he was up for the boat race."

"You saw him!—where? Did you speak to him? He never told me."

"Don't excite yourself. There's no cause for fear. He didn't see me—*fancies* I'm under the water; I've no doubt. I'll tell you how it was. I was awfully out of elbows, hadn't had a penny in my pocket or a bit of food in my mouth for a day and a half. It was so bad, I had begun to think of the river, and wish I'd done it in earnest; and I was wandering along Piccadilly, a little after midnight, looking out for a snug doorway where I could cuddle up without fear of the bobby, when I came on two men, arm in arm. One had a face like an angel, so handsome—I've seen him since in the park, and he's A 1 for looks—and he was talking of home, tenderly like, as if he had one, and loved it. Somehow, I thought 'that man will give me a penny and spare impertinence with it'—though, faith, Merle, I was too sick with hunger to care much for any sauce so I got the penny; but just as I opened my mouth to beg, the moon came out bright on the face of the other man, and—it was your cousin. My! how I ran! There's many a one with a good meal inside of them couldn't have got over the ground as quick; and, for my life, I don't know why I did so. I think starving had made me half silly, for I never stopped till I came bang round a corner against a policeman. He threw out his

arm, and knocked me down—by accident, you know; but I must have been as weak as water, for I fainted, and he took me off to the station-house. Wasn't I glad when I came to? for I did get something to eat then—a cup of coffee and a bit of bread—besides the night's rest. Dear! how good that coffee tasted! I can smell the flavour now; and— Why, Merle! What's that for? Who asked you to kiss my hands?"

For he had caught them in both his, and was pressing them passionately to his lips, his eyes full of great, compassionate tears—tears that were no disgrace to his manhood; only—alas!—that with poor Merle they came so easily. Perhaps Miss Dynevor remembered that fact—remembered, too, how quickly the first sight of moisture in those great black eyes had broken down the defences of her tender, girlish heart. Anyhow, she snatched away her hands with some little irritation; and there was a satirical curl on her red lips as he answered, deprecatingly—

"Forgive me, Minnie. I could not help it. I can't bear to think of you, so young and beautiful, in such terrible straits—actually wanting food. Why, why did you run such risks? Why—"

"Did I leave a home where I was so happy and respected—nothing to complain of in the world, eh?" she put in, with the same curling lip.

Merle's face turned dusky red.

"At least you might have written," he said, trying to talk down his confusion. "You know I would rather have starved myself than that you should have wanted any comfort I could give you. Come, little one, be just to me, whatever my faults are. *Didn't* you know it?"

"Don't think I ever considered the subject," she answered. "I know this, however, that if there had been no human being in this world but you between me and the river, I would have chosen the river rather than ask one farthing's help from you."

"Did you hate me so bitterly then?" Merle sighed, sadly. "It's rather a hard thing to tell a man who has never felt otherwise than tenderly and warmly to you from the first day you met him."

"Then I won't tell it you. I shouldn't like to be hard—not that people give me that character generally. De Gesvrolles and Sir Carlton don't."

"I wish to heaven they did! Minnie, how can—"

"Didn't I tell you not to call me Minnie?"

"I beg your pardon—Lottie, then; or Miss Dynevor, whichever you like; only that I shouldn't care a hang what Lottie Dynevor did or didn't do, and I care too much for what Minnie Bruce does."

"Minnie Bruce don't exist, or she'd thank you. What's Lottie Dynevor doing that your reverence don't like?"

"Flirting—encouraging people like Sir Carlton Drugh and his set, men who are moral plague spots in any community, more brutes than men; only that I should be sorry to see the brute like them. And you encourage them. You let that Drugh hang over you, and kiss your hand—"

"As you did just now. Yes."

"Is there no difference? Minnie! Minnie! there was a time when you thought otherwise, when you would not have counted my kisses and those of that coarse, sensual animal in the same category. Good heavens! it makes me almost mad when I see his vile, hairy face hanging over your shoulder; and you—*like* him."

"He likes me," she said, provokingly.

"By the way, it's just three; so I dare say he'll be here in a few minutes. He generally looks in on my 'at home' days."

"Three? I must go then," replied Merle, biting his lips at having to leave the field to the man against whom he had been warning her; but unwilling to "afficher" himself by being found tête-à-tête with an actress whose piquante beauty and capricious fancies were a favourite subject for gossip at the clubs. It was his old prudent principle of "Suck the honey and escape the sting;" and in Minnie's girlhood it had succeeded admirably. Now, matters were changed. She looked up at his sudden move with a fund of intelligence and humour sparkling covertly in her splendid eyes, and stretched out her warm, slender hand to detain him.

"Don't go, Merle, I want you."

"I had an engagement for this time. Very provoking; but I will look in again in an hour or so, if you will let me."

"No, I won't let you. I want you to stay now; and if you won't, I shall tell the boy to say 'not at home,' next time you come. Sit down again."

And still holding his hand, she pointed to the end of the sofa which touched her chair. Merle would have been more than—Merle,

if he had resisted the persuasive touch of those slight fingers. Dropping into the seat indicated, he said, half reluctantly, half in reproach—

"I ought to go; and Minnie, if you don't like me, and won't listen to my advice, why ask me to stay? It can do you no good."

There was a ring at the door, but he did not hear it; for in the same moment Minnie turned to him with all the old sweetness in her look, the old childish, caressing tone—

"Can't it, Merle? How do you know I don't like you? Perhaps I do. Perhaps I mayn't care to receive Sir Carlton Drugh without you to—to keep him in order."

The whispered, winning, too-coaxing words! Where was prudence now? Merle still held her hand, and once again lifted it to his lips.

"Dearest Minnie!" he said, kissing it softly; and as he did so the door opened, and Sir Carlton Drugh and Arthur Cloughton were announced.

Mr. Kinnardson went home that evening in his now customary state of half proud, half miserable bewilderment and discontent. All the afternoon, this actress—so changeable and so courted—had, as it were, singled him out by a softness and gentleness of demeanour which could not but be flattering to a young man; more especially as it evidently stirred up flames of wrath and jealousy in some of the other men. Sir Carlton Drugh, indeed, took on himself to snub this young gentleman, whom he himself had introduced, and who had so abused his kindness. He did not get much by the move, however. Miss Dynevor lifted her eyebrows, and stared at him with cool surprise for about ten seconds; then turned to Merle with a smile sweet enough to set his pulses throbbing, and said something to him in an undertone, and with a soft, apologetic laugh which turned Sir Carlton purple with rage. He would have liked to choke his rival; and Merle, stung by his snubs, forgot caution, and devoted himself to Miss Dynevor with an ardour as unfeigned as it was pointed, and which caused Cloughton to shrug his shoulders wonderingly, as he whispered to the blonde young lady who shared Minnie's residence—

"Awfully hard hit Kinnardson seems, doesn't he?"

"Frightfully. He's been here hours already," laughed the young person addressed. "But Lottie always makes quick running at

first—she soon tires. He's having his turn now. I shouldn't wonder"—with a pout—"if it was yours next."

"Not if I know it," said Cloughton. "I like blonde beauties. But what will Kinnardson's people say? He's engaged, I hear."

"La! is he? What a wicked fellow. I'll bet you a pair of gloves Lottie don't know. Wouldn't she flare up?"

"Don't tell her, then. But of course you will."

"Now, Mr. Cloughton, what do you take me for?"

"Don't ask me, I might make you blush. But, seriously, I think it would do him no harm if you did. He's a good fellow, and my friend, you know; so I'm bound to take care of him."

"And welcome. Who wants to hurt him, Mr. Cloughton? I'm sure he's not so charming that Lottie would care to take him from his young lady."

"No; but if his young lady (I don't know who she is, mind you) were to hear of his philandering here, she mightn't be willing to take him at all; and I suppose she has money, for he has none, and, besides, is going to be a parson."

"So some one said; and Lottie said she hated parsons."

"How ungrateful! for they're invariably fond of petticoats, perhaps because they wear them themselves in the shop."

"Fie, Mr. Cloughton, now. I wonder at you," &c., &c.

The rest of the conversation, however entertaining to the parties engaged in it, is hardly worth repetition here. What we have recorded bore fruit on later occasions when Merle visited Edith-grove.

He stayed away for several days after this, struggling against the fascination which seemed to be ever drawing him in the direction of West Brompton; telling himself that he had no business there; that he was doing no good to Minnie, and only harm to himself; that, bewitching as she was to him, the passion fostered by her presence was merely that of the senses; that in the bottom of his heart Enid's little finger was more precious and more sacred to him than Minnie's entire person; and that if Enid ever came to hear of these visits and hand-kissings, she might justly doubt his love, and consider her own insulted. He told himself, too, that

Minnie was a practised coquette; that if she smiled on him one day, she would smile on Count de Gesvrolles, her French admirer, the next; that though once in a way Sir Carlton got snubbed, he was evidently too secure in his position even to alter his insolently confident demeanour; that in becoming an "ami de la maison" he was only risking his character and his love, and injuring himself, without any other benefit than the gratification of Minnie's vanity and his weakness—all of which reasons, being wise enough for Solon, left him only longing the more for an excuse to take a hansom and journey westwards. Give him credit. He resisted the weakness, and even tried to drive it away by re-reading Enid's last letter. Unfortunately, this happened to be filled with nothing but Jack's trouble and Aunt Jane's illness; and though she did not forget to ask if his theological studies were progressing, to suggest advertisements for curacies in the *Guardian*, and to observe that she had ordered two new knitted waistcoats for him against the winter, as London-bought things were sure not to be equal to old nurse Alick's handiwork, these affectionate but homely reminders sounded dry as sawdust and flat as ditch-water, after the piquant if dangerous excitement of Minnie's sharp words and tender glances. He actually flung the letter aside in a rage, and answered it by ten lines almost brutal in their caustic insolence. Then, when too late, repented himself bitterly; picked up the poor, ill-used letter with penitent hands, and wrote another—passionate, vaguely self-accusing, and mysteriously wretched, which he despatched after the last.

Poor Enid felt rather ill-used at receiving these two epistles within twelve hours of each other. She had written of the family troubles, not dwelling on *her* share of them; but appealing to his sympathy for poor Jack; and (half shrinkingly) to his pity for his old schoolfellow's fall.

This was the result!

With the patient eyes full of tears, and the loving heart sick with disappointment, she was yet able to lay down letter one with this consolation—not a new one: "Poor fellow! He doesn't mean a word of it. He's only out of temper." But the second, though confirming this idea, was even more unsatisfactory to a reasonable and matter-of-fact nature. She could not enter into

troubles which were only vaguely hinted at, pardon faults the nature of which were hidden in mystery or excuse herself for coldness which she did not feel; and the only word even alluding to their trouble being a light remark that, "if the young lady preferred Clif, Jack ought to be glad to get rid of her. He hoped Master Gore would not turn his attentions on Enid next, for, of course, he wasn't going to marry the girl; his flirtations always stopped short of that mark, and small blame to him, as long as the women liked it."

Enid turned from the page with this sore consciousness eating into her heart—that Merle did not feel with them. Once away from the old roof-tree that had sheltered him, this thunderbolt which had fallen on it was but a passing trifle in his mind; and for the future she must learn to bear her own burdens, without asking sympathy or expecting it to be offered. She tried not to think him selfish; but I am afraid the fiery ploughshare over which her feet had walked of late had opened her eyes to many things of which they had been innocent formerly; and, though her answer, when written, was both gentle and affectionate—condoning the insolence of his first, and making no allusion to the pain inflicted by his second—Merle, reading it with the hungry avidity of a drowning man seeking for a straw, one passionate word, be it even of anger, to hold him from the precipice before him, flung the calm, sensible missive into the grate, with a pang of disappointment, and apostrophizing the writer as a feelingless piece of machinery, caught up his hat and went off to West Brompton. The four days' abstinence from that Calypso's grot had seemed like forty to him; and he hailed an excuse for seeing again that bright, responsive face, whose variations from mirth to gravity, and from scorn to tenderness, were a perpetual study to any one interested in more than the flesh and blood of feminine prettiness.

The fact was that his nature, sensuous and sensitive, was at once fascinated and tantalized by this girl's sudden changes from mocking satire to passionate warmth. Every interview left him with a more piquant anticipation of what the next would turn out; and now and then he could not help fancying that, under all her whims and apparent coldness, she still loved him as she had done in the days of old.

But of course you will say, such an idea ought to be only painful to a man whose love was already engaged to another woman. Dearly beloved, I agree with you; but forgive me the reminder—What *ought* to be is too frequently exactly the reverse of what *is*. A young man of three and twenty may be a saint; but I doubt whether many of our youngsters would care to send in their papers for canonization at that period of life. To be loved by a young and beautiful woman, whose talent is the rage, and whose favour the prize of his own particular world, could hardly fail to be gratifying to nine men out of ten; and Merle, who had known her in her youthful innocence and guilelessness, who had proved the depths of passion smouldering in that young, ill-regulated heart, felt with a fierce, proud throbbing at his own, that her love would indeed be love—no milk and water platonism; but the love, hot and passionate, which he hungered for in Enid; the love he could give himself; and felt sore and embittered at not receiving. It was all madness, of course; but unfortunately insanity, even when criminal, is sometimes more pleasant than reason—too pleasant, in this case, to be resisted.

"I can't help it," he said, banging the door behind him. "If she cared to keep me at her feet she could; but she doesn't. She knows what London temptations are well enough; but she is too proud to stretch out a finger to save me from them—pretends not to understand, and talks about *Jack*. Jack! As if I oughtn't to be a thousand-fold more to her than all the brothers and relations in the world! But she is so cursedly impartial, I believe she would like to weigh out her love as she does the kitchen groceries—half an ounce to this one, and half an ounce to that. I wish to Heaven she had one half-ounce of Minnie's heart to warm her pure perfection."

He had talked himself into a passion—not an uncommon feat with men (and women) when they are dissatisfied with themselves; and, being thus prepared to lose the little prudence that he had yet preserved, he got into the Metropolitan for West Brompton, and was soon seated at Miss Dynevor's side, teasing her for an invitation to a rural tea at Richmond or Cliefden, to be given by that young lady to a select dozen of her most intimate friends, and which, it was whispered, was to be something exceptionally spicy and delightful to all concerned.

A HOLIDAY IN THE NORTH.

VII.

THE following morning we slept our sleep out, as we had determined to rest here for a day; and when we issued from our night quarters, we found a bright sun looking down on us, and everything green, and fresh, and warm, looking as though summer was really about to assert her authority. We were not long over our breakfast, and, as soon as it was finished, strolled quietly off to look at the celebrated Althing, where the ancient Icelandic Parliaments, or Things, were held. This consists of a kind of peninsula of rock, separated from the surrounding plain by tremendous chasms, or cracks in the lava, down which you may look for forty or fifty feet before your eye reaches the clear water below—so clear that you can still follow the sides of the cleft down and down, until they are lost in darkness and indistinctness. In most parts these chasms are a considerable breadth; but in one place the sides approach so close that a man named Flosi is said to have leaped across to escape from his pursuers in the days of old. He must have been a bold man, for a more unpleasant-looking place it is difficult to imagine.

From the Althing we walked across to the falls of the Oxará, and sat for some time on the opposite brink of the chasm, watching the clear sheet of water sweeping over the cliff, and breaking into spray and foam on the rocks below. The river runs along the chasm for three or four hundred yards, and then bursts out again through the lower rim on to the plain below. Just where it gathers itself together, as it were, for this final burst, is the Witch's Pool, or Pool of Execution—a dark, swirling, deadly-looking place, from which one would have little chance of emerging alive.

Going back to the church for our guns and rods, we strolled down to the lake, and shot one or two of the beautiful sea swallows which abound in Iceland, for the sake of their feathers; and some of us, getting into a boat, rowed out and began to fish. Far out, we never got a chance; but by keeping along the land, and fishing in shore, we got a good many of the fish called by the Icelanders *pleikja*, averaging about half a pound each. These fish seem to be a species of trout, with dark backs, reddish-yellow bellies and fins, and rather smooth skins. The

flesh is a yellowish pink, and they are excellent eating. I could not learn what the Latin name for them was, and did not know the fish before. Any attempt to fish in the river here was hopeless.

Towards five o'clock we landed again, and, on getting back to the church, set to work to prepare our dinner, after which we again strolled down towards the lake, and wandered on among fissures, chasms, streams and swamps, until we came to a little knoll overlooking the lake, where we sat down in lazy enjoyment of the scene. Right before us was a great expanse of calm, blue water, reflecting the exquisite evening lights, with wild swans, ducks, and other birds flapping lazily along over its surface, or paddling to and fro under the bank; while, far away on the other side, a gnarled old purple mountain stood up against the sky, and puffs of white smoke rising from its breast, like gipsy encampments, showed where the hot springs nestled in its hollows. Right and left little promontories ran out into the lake, and more red and purple hills were seen in the distance, the variety of colour being something marvellous, in a land where there are no trees, and but scant vegetation of any kind.

Turning round with our backs to the lake the view was also most striking. The little church and parsonage of Thingvalla, some three-quarters of a mile off, stood up against the black line of the Almannagja, which was broken again farther on by the white falls of the Oxará. Behind it a fine hill, which had all day worn its nightcap, but now that night was approaching (though not darkness) had cast it away, showed its bold outline against the sunset sky. Farther to the right, the green plain of Thingvalla stretched away to the foot of the snow-spotted Skjaldbreid, and the view closed in with some sharp, jagged lava peaks, and the black line of the Heafnagja, which corresponds with the Almannagja on the other side of the plain.

But it was getting cold, and we turned our steps homeward to the little church, and again lay down for a good night's rest, under a wooden roof. The next day was to see us under canvas at the Geysers, and we made the most of a substantial building while we could.

Early the next morning we began the day by a swim in the river, it being too cold to bathe in the tempting cleft round the Al-

thing, as we had intended. We then loaded our baggage horses, and sent them off on the road to the Geysers, that we might not be troubled with them on the way, while we went into the parsonage Bær and made a good breakfast off the most excellent coffee supplied to us, and our own sausages, after which we turned our backs on the little church and the Almannagja, and rode off, in the warm sunshine, on the road to one of the great wonders of the world.

We had some rough riding across the green plain, which was much broken up by chasms and crevasses in the lava; and about an hour and a half brought us to its eastern limit, the Hrafnagja. This is a precipice or cleft of much the same description as its vis-à-vis, the Almannagja, but is not so marked in its features; and on crossing it by a sort of causeway, where the sides had fallen in, we found ourselves in much the same sort of country as that which borders the Great Rift, but a good deal rougher, and with a very indistinct track across it.

Here, to our ineffable disgust, we came up with our baggage, which had started considerably before us, and which we had vainly hoped to find waiting our arrival at the Geyser in the evening. But we were determined not to be bothered with it more than necessary; so pushed past it, and rode merrily on at a good pace. We were now on a somewhat elevated sort of table land, covered with a sparse, dry vegetation, consisting chiefly of the eternal, greyish-white moss. On our left, black, volcanic-looking mountains scowled down upon our track; and on our right, beyond the rolling foreground, nothing was to be seen but a dim line of blue hills in the far, far distance. For many miles, there was no sign of a habitation; but we met one or two long caravans of native travellers, their horses laden with a most miscellaneous cargo.

Remaining behind to see that the fishing rods and gun cases (our great bugbears) were not getting shaken to pieces, I had a hard ride to overtake my companions; but at last, following the path down a steep slope along the hillside, I rode out on to a small, green plain, where I found them halted and dismounted. Jumping off, I threw the bridle over my pony's head, and, leaving it to graze where it would, flung myself down beside the rest of the party, and gave myself up to the enjoyment of the scene, the grass, and the blazing sun.

A tremendous volcanic cliff, in which red and black alternated, towered up above our heads, and almost shut out the sky from view, while on either side the hills sloped gently away, forming a natural amphitheatre, and to the southward the plain (no longer green, though) stretched away for miles and miles. It was, to the very life, the enchanted valley to which Lord Dufferin likens it.

The baggage soon came up; and after a short rest we were on the move again, now driving the pack-horses in front of us, as the road became more difficult to follow. Rising again from the plain, we entered upon what the poor Icelanders dignify with the name of a birch *forest*—that is to say, a tract of country covered with straggling dwarf birch trees, varying in height from five or six inches to as many feet. It is, nevertheless, sufficiently inconvenient for riding, as the birch scrub is for ever catching the traveller's feet, and doing its best to unhorse him. For an hour or two we rode on through this "forest," now and then crossing a little stream, which cut through our track in a deep gully, until at length we arrived on the bank of the dreaded Bruarà.

"Dreaded" only by ourselves; for we had read and heard so much about it, that we had at last come to fear it with a great fear. We had heard that it was a roaring torrent, with a tremendous chasm in its midst, which must be crossed by a bridge formed by a few planks, themselves under water, slippery, and insecure, where a false step on the part of your horse might be instantly fatal, &c., &c. We found it a broad stream, about a foot to a foot and a half deep, with a chasm in the middle, spanned by a substantial plank bridge, with a good railing at each side, and altogether about as safe a looking place as one could wish. No doubt if one had fallen over, it would have been fatal, as the torrent foamed and roared like thunder below; but there was no excuse for so foolish a proceeding.

Before reaching the Bruarà, however, we had halted again, on the edge of the plain, at Middali, to lunch and change horses; and here, on the low ground, the flies swarmed by millions, and became a most intolerable nuisance. As long as we were riding it mattered not, as we had nets to put over our heads; but when we came to lunch we were obliged to take these off,

and the little grey flies wasted no time in taking advantage of our helpless situation, and in a moment eyes, ears, mouth, nose, and food were full of them. Here, too, we came in sight of a Hekla, on the south-west; and all the rest of the day he looked blackly at us across the broad, flat valley of the Hvita, as we rode along.

After crossing the Bruarà, the birch scrub still continued, and we began to look upon it as interminable. Towards three o'clock, however, we left it behind us, and skirted the plain at a tolerable pace for another two hours, when, on winding round the shoulder of a hill, we saw numerous thick columns of white steam rising into the air from a hillside some four miles away. We were in sight of the Geysers, and instinctively quickened our pace. But we had still some distance to ride, on account of intervening swamps; and one bog especially impressed us, which was crossed by a narrow causeway of earth. Here the baggage-horses stopped to crop the grass growing on the causeway; and on our trying to urge them forward, they pushed and jostled one another, until at last one of them fell over into the bog, and caused some delay, and considerable anxiety for the fate of his load, before he could be extricated.

At about six o'clock in the evening we rode up to the side of the Great Geyser, and on our dismounting several of the horses lay down at once, quite tired out with their long day. We unloaded them as quickly as possible, and proceeded to pitch the tent; after which we dispersed to various occupations—some unpacking the luggage, some exploring, and some turning the hot water of the Geyser to account by having a good wash. The Geyser, however, did not seem inclined to suffer such an unwarranted familiarity; for as soon as three were gathered round it—one of whom had his shoes and stockings off, to bathe his feet, another his face and hands in a lather, and the third with his face under water, while the toilet necessities of all three were spread in a row along the edge of the basin—the Geyser began to show signs of remonstrance. The gentleman with bare feet had just remarked that he "hoped the Geyser would not take this opportunity of blowing up," when, almost before the words were out of his mouth, a fearful explosion shook the ground beneath our feet, followed quickly by another, and another. The effect was mar-

vellous. The three, with horror depicted on their countenances, started to their feet, and catching up what articles of toilet they could in their hurry, made for the tent as fast as their various conditions would allow, to the intense amusement of the others. On reaching the tent, all three sat down and relapsed into fits of laughter; while the Great Geyser, content with the effect it had produced, after a little bubbling and boiling over, returned to its normal condition of peace and quietude.

Rain had been threatening for some time, and now began to fall in a slight drizzle; so we got into our Mackintoshes, and proceeded to boil our tea in the Geyser, known as the Old Strokkr. This, in conjunction with Australian beef, biscuits, butter, and unlimited milk, drunk straight from the bucket, in which it was brought from the Bær, made an excellent meal, and, fortified therewith, we proceeded to tease the Strokkr (churn) of the present day, by throwing turf and stones down its capacious mouth. This ought to have the effect of producing an eruption; but the Strokkr was lazy to-night, and refused to lose his temper. I fancy we did not give him a large enough meal. The Little Strokkr, however—a small Geyser lower down the hillside—favoured us with a very pretty little eruption, continuing for some time. The stream was some four or five inches in diameter, and rose to about thirty feet in height.

By this time it had begun to rain heavily, so we prepared to turn in; but the Great Geyser might have an eruption while we were asleep, and that would never do; so we agreed each to watch for two hours, and drew lots for the order in which we were to sacrifice ourselves for the public good. Leaving the first victim sitting in a Mackintosh at the door of the tent, looking thoroughly miserable, we settled ourselves inside; and our spirits, which had been running high all day, began to sink again as the rain poured steadily down on the tent, and now and then a drop would come through, and, falling upon some exposed portion of the human frame, would cause various exclamations and sudden starts, which were sufficient to wake all the rest of the party, for we were packed like herrings in a barrel. Eventually, however, Morpheus was too strong for us, and some, at least, snored heavily.

The lot had fallen on me to watch from

three a.m. to five, and by the time my turn came the rain had ceased, and all was fine again, though tolerably cold. In order that there might be no danger of sleep overtaking me, I went out and walked round all the Geysers, of which there are a great number, besides many holes in the earth, from which steam continually issues. The principal of them is the Great Geyser, which has its opening at the top of a small mound, made apparently by itself, of a light grey, siliceous substance, the whole thing very much resembling the outside of an oyster shell, to which it has been likened by a former traveller. At the top of the mound is a saucer-like basin, about sixty feet in diameter, in the centre of which a hole, about nine feet across, descends vertically into the earth. As a rule, the basin is full of water at a high temperature, from which the steam rolls away in thick clouds. In the centre, over the mouth of the tube, the water is always in motion, and at times rises considerably above the level of the rest of the pool, as it had done last evening, when we were put to flight. After an eruption the water sinks and leaves the basin empty, and one can then walk into it and look down the tube.

The Strokkr, which is the next eruptive spring in point of size to the Great Geyser, is a little farther down the slope of the hill, and has no basin, like its great neighbour. It is merely a tube, six or seven feet in diameter, in which the water is for ever boiling and seething, with considerable noise, some eight or ten feet below the surface of the ground. All the other Geysers are modifications of these two, in appearance, though many of them never have eruptions, and some are little better than pits of hot mud; while others, again, are brilliant yellow, and most of them seem to be more or less sulphurous.

The eruptions of the Great Geyser are not periodical, so that one never knows what to expect. Sometimes weeks will pass without its giving any sign of activity, and at other times, again, several eruptions will occur in a single day. When we arrived there had been none for ten days before, so we were sanguine.

Towards four o'clock I saw clouds of steam coming from the Little Strokkr, and I went down to look at the eruption. While I was thus occupied, I happened to look round, and saw that the Great Strokkr was also in eruption. I ran back to watch it,

and found it so fine, that although we had agreed not to call one another for anything but the Great Geyser, I ran up to the tent, and putting my head in at the door, suggested, in a low tone, that "any one who was awake had better get up and look at the Strokkr." In a few seconds the tent was empty, and we were all collected round the Strokkr. Column after column of water shot up forty or fifty feet in the air, huge masses of white steam rolled off, and stones and sods, which we had thrown into it last night, were deposited on the brink. The only drawback to the beauty of the scene was that the water was a muddy brown on this account. The eruption continued, with short intervals, for nearly half an hour, when the water sank back finally, gasping and moaning, into the tube, and we turned in again for more sleep, leaving the last man at his post to watch the Great Geyser.

ANGUISH IN PRINT.

IN THE STRICTEST CONFIDENCE.

TEAR THE TWENTY-FOURTH.

MY HEART TORN.

I HAD no idea that Achille was well enough to go on with the lessons, neither had anybody in the house; for Miss Furness had just summoned us all to the French class, and my mind was, to a certain extent, free from care and pre-occupation, when I heard a most horrible snarling, and yelling, and crying for help. Of course I darted in agony to the window, when it was just as I had anticipated—just as I knew, by means of the electric current existing between our hearts—Achille was in peril; for the horrible dog had attacked him, and there he was in full flight.

As I reached the window, the wretch leaped upon him, seizing his coat, and tearing away a great piece of the skirt; but the next moment poor Achille made a bound, and caught at one of the boughs of the cedar he was beneath; and there he hung, with the horrible dog snapping and jumping at his toes every time they came low enough.

It was too bad of Clara, and whatever else I may look over, I can never forgive this; for she laughed out loudly in the most heartless way, and that set all the other girls off laughing, though Miss Furness, as soon as she saw what had hap-

pened, began to scream, and ran out of the room.

Only to think of it, for them all to be laughing, when the poor fellow must have been in agony! Now he contracted, now he hung down; then he drew himself up again, so that the dog could not reach him; but then, I suppose, from utter weariness, his poor legs dropped down again, and the vicious brute jumped at them, when of course poor Achille snatched them up again—who wouldn't?—just as if he had been made of india-rubber, so Clara said. Such a shame, laughing at any one in such torment! But it was quite excruciating to see the poor fellow; and if I had dared I should have seized the poker and gone to his assistance. But, then, I was so horribly afraid of the wretched dog myself that I could not have gone near it; and there poor Achille still hung, suffering as it were a very martyrdom, with the dog snap, snap, snapping at his toes, so that I felt sure he would either be killed or frightfully torn; and then, all at once, I could not keep it back, but gave a most horrible shriek, for though James was running to get hold of the dog, he was too late.

The beast—the dog I mean, not James—had taken advantage of poor Achille's weariness, leaped up and seized him by one boot, when nature could bear no more weight, and I saw the poor sufferer fall right upon the dog; when there was a scuffle and noise of contention, and the cowardly animal ran yelping and limping off upon three legs; while Achille, looking pale and furious, stood straightening and brushing his clothes, and trying to put himself in a fit state to pay his visit.

That was the last I saw; for the next thing I remember is Mrs. Blunt calling me a foolish, excitable girl; and they were sopping my face with cold water and making my hair all in such a mess, while the salts they held close to my nose were so strong that they nearly choked me.

"There, leave her now, young ladies, she is getting better," said Mrs. Blunt; for the horrible sick sensation was certainly going off, and I began to awaken to the feeling that Achille was safe. Then it struck me all at once that I must have fainted away from what I had seen, and the thoughts of those around being suspicious nerved me to rouse myself up and hide all my confusion.

They wanted me to give up my French lesson that morning, but I declared that I was so much better that they let me go in, and I really did expect just a glance; but, no, he was like a piece of marble, and took not the slightest notice either of Clara or poor me. Then, too, he was as cross and snappish as could be, and found such fault, saying everything was disgracefully done, and that every one had been going back with the French ever since he had been away. But I did not mind that a bit; for I saw how it was making Miss Furness's ears tingle, which was some consolation, seeing how hard she had been working us, and what a fuss she had been making, as if she were Monsieur Achille's deputy; and really I was getting jealous of the tiresome old thing.

I took my snubbing very patiently; but I could not help feeling terribly angry when he rose to go, and, with an affectation of bashfulness, Miss Furness followed, simpering, looking, or rather trying to look, in our eyes, as if she were engaged. But I followed too, almost as soon as the door was closed; and to my rage and disgust I found the hall empty, while Achille's hat still stood upon the table, so that he could not have gone.

"They must have gone into the drawing-room," I muttered.

And then once more my head began to swim, for I felt raging jealous; and it did seem a thing that, after all I had suffered and done for his sake, I was to be given up for a dreadful screwy thing, old enough to be my mother at the very least. But I would not faint this time, I was too angry; and stepping across the hall, I opened the drawing-room door, softly and quickly, and walked in just in time to see that base deceiver, Achille, kissing the hand of the old hypocrite. And how they did both flinch and cower before my indignant glance!

Miss Furness was, of course, the first to recover herself, and step forward in a vixenish manner, just as if she would have liked to bite.

"And pray, Miss Bozerne, what may be your business?" she exclaimed.

"Oh, I merely came for my wool-work," I replied, in a tone of the most profound contempt; and, sweeping across the room, I fetched a piece of work that I knew to be under one of the chair cushions, and then I marched off, leaving Achille the very

image of confusion, while as for Miss Furness, she was ready to fly at me with spite and anger.

I kept it up till I was outside the room, and had given the door a smart bang, when I rushed upstairs, and past Mrs. Blunt, who called to me in vain to stop, and then into my bed-room, where I locked myself in, and had such a cry, as I dashed down the wool-work, and threw myself upon the bed, to lie with my burning cheek upon my pillow, and water it with my tears.

Rage, vexation, disappointment, love—I'm sure they were all mingled together, and sending me half wild. Only to think of his turning out a deceiver!—to leave me and go and pay court to a woman of forty, with a yellow skin, scraggy neck, and a temper of the most shrewish! I was so passionate then, that I jumped off the bed and ran to the glass, and if it too was not a deceiver, and did not tell me a story, I was handsome. But I vowed that I would be revenged for it all; and I stamped up and down the room, thinking of what would be the best way; but, somehow, I could not think of a plan then, so I lay down once more, and had another good cry.

"Never mind," I said.

And then I raised myself upon my elbow, and just at that moment some one knocked.

"What is it?" I exclaimed, after they had knocked four times, and would not go away.

"Mrs. de Blount says that she requests you to descend directly," said one of the younger pupils.

"Tell her I have a very bad headache," I said, which really was a fact; and then I would not answer any more questions, for I was determined not to go down until all the marks of my crying had faded away, which I knew would not be for some time.

"Miss Furness won't make me afraid of her any more," I said to myself. "I've mastered her secret; and Achille dare not tell of me, for fear of betraying himself. I'll serve them both out for it."

And then I lay nursing up my wrath, till I felt obliged to cry again; and then, when I had done crying, I again picked up my wrath and nursed it; and so on, backwards and forwards, till all at once I started up, for there was one of those hideous German brass bands, with a set of towy-headed, sleepy-faced boys blaring out "Partant pour la Syrie" in the most horribly discordant manner, till James was sent to

order them out of the grounds, when, to get the horrible discords out of my head, and my mind more in tune, I took advantage of a permission lately given me by Mrs. Blunt, and slipped quietly down into the drawing-room, which was now empty, and sitting down to the piano, I rattled away at "La Pluie de Perles" until my fingers ached again, when I took up something of Talex's, and I suppose it was all emotional, for I'm sure I never played so brilliantly before in my life—the notes seemed quite to sparkle under my fingers, and I kept on rattling away till I was tired, and dashed off the great finishing chords at the end, when I slammed down the piano, spun myself round upon the stool, and jumping up, I was about to make a pirouette, and what we girls, in happy, innocent, thoughtless days, used to call a cheese, when I gave such a start, for Mrs. Blunt was standing there with a lady in walking costume, who was smilingly inspecting me through a great gold eye-glass.

TEAR THE TWENTY-FIFTH.

MRS. BRASSEY.

YES, there was a tall, imposing-looking lady gazing at me through her great gold eye-glass, just as if I were some curiosity; and, of course, instead of the pirouette, I made one of the spun-out, graceful obeisances so popular at the Cedars.

"One of our pupils," said Mrs. Blunt, in her most polite tones. "Mrs. Campanelle Brassey—Miss Bozorne. Young and high-spirited, you see," she continued, smiling benignantly upon me, just in the way that she had done when mamma was with me, and never since. "Young, happy, and light-hearted. Just at that age when life has no cares"—couldn't I have pinched her. "She adores music—quite a daughter of the Muses."

"Charming gyrl," said the lady, smiling. "Sweetly featured—so gazelle-eyed. Most unaccountably like my Euphemia."

"Indeed!" said Mrs. Blunt. "How singular! They will, no doubt, be like sisters."

"Charming for Euphemia, to be sure," said Mrs. Brassey. "It will make the change from home so pleasant, and she will not pine."

"No fear of that," said Mrs. Blunt—"ours is too home-like an abode."

"No doubt," said Mrs. Brassey. "And then there is that other charming gyrl—the

one with the sweet, high-spirited features—the one you just now showed me. Lady—Lady—Lady Somebody's daughter."

"Lady Fitzacre's," said Mrs. Blunt.

"To be sure," said Mrs. Brassey. "Why, your establishment will be most enviable, Mrs. Fortesquieu de Blount; for I'm sure that you will have the Three Graces within your walls."

"Ah, fie!" exclaimed Mrs. Blunt, playfully; "you are bringing quite a blush to the face of our young friend."

My cheeks certainly were tingling, but it was only to hear them talk such twaddle; and I knew well enough now that they must have been looking on for some time, while Mrs. Blunt only let me keep on playing to show off before the visitor; for if it had been one of the girls who played badly, she would have been snubbed and sent off in a hurry for practising out of her turn.

For a moment, though, I felt a pang shoot through me—a jealous pang—as I thought that, if this new pupil came, she might bear off from me my Achilles; while the next moment I was ready to laugh scornfully from the recollection that I had no Achilles, that he was already another's, that men were all false and deceivers, and that I could now turn satirical, and sympathise with Clara. However, I showed none of the painful emotions sweeping through my breast, but took all in good part, and allowed Mrs. Brassey to tap me with her eye-glass, and kiss me on the cheek, which kiss was, after all, only a peck with her hooky nose; and then she must take what she called a fancy to me, and march me about with them all over the place, and call me "My love," and "My sweet child," and all that sort of stuff, when she was seeing me now for the first time; while, if I had been the most amiable of girls, but plain, like Grace Murray, instead of showy and dashing, she would not have taken the least mite of notice of me.

But, really, this is a dreadfully hypocritical world!

"My Euphemia will be charmed to know you, my love," said Mrs. Brassey, looking at me as if I were good to eat, and she were a cannibal's wife—"charmed, I'm sure."

"I sha'n't be charmed to know her," I said to myself, "if she is as insincere as you are."

"I'm sure that you will soon be the best of friends. It will be so nice for her to



have one to welcome her directly she leaves home, while, of course, we shall have the pleasure of seeing you on a visit at the Belfry during the vacation."

Of course I thanked her, and thought that if I liked Euphemia I should very likely go home with her for a while, since all places now seemed the same to me, and I should require some *délassement*.

"This is one of our class-rooms, my dear madam," said Mrs. Blunt, opening the door where all the girls were sitting, while just then Clara came across from the practice-room, with her music-book beneath her arm, and Mrs. Blunt had taken care that Mrs. Campanelle Brassey should not stand and hear her hammer away at the old ting-tang, for Clara told me afterwards that she stopped as soon as the door opened. But then Clara never could play a bit, and I must say that she knew it, though, as I before said, her sketches were lovely.

"Charming, indeed," said Mrs. Brassey, inspecting the girls through her glass, just as if it were a lens, and they were all so many cheese-mites.

Just then I exchanged glances with Miss Furness, but I was not going to be stared down; but feeling, as I did, fierce and defiant, I just contemptuously lowered my lids, and then the door was closed, and we went into the dining-room, and then upstairs to the dormitories.

"What a charming little nest!" exclaimed Mrs. Brassey, when we entered our room at last, after inspecting, I think, every room in the place—for everything really was kept beautifully nice, and neat, and clean; while, though plain, the furniture and carpets were tasty and nice—"what a charming little nest! Three beds, too! And pray who sleeps here?"

"Let me see," said Mrs. Blunt, affecting ignorance, "this is your room, is it not, my dear? Ah! yes, I remember; and you have Miss Fitzacre with you, and who else?"

"Miss Smith, ma'am," I said, quietly.

"Ah, to be sure, Miss Smith," said Mrs. Blunt.

"Not a very aristocratic name," said Mrs. Brassey, smiling, and twirling her eye-glass about. "Pity, now, that that bed is not at liberty; it would have been so charming for the three girls to have been together night and day. I suppose that you could not manage to change the present order, Mrs. de Blount?"

"Shall I give up my bed, ma'am?" I said, quietly.

"Oh, dear me, no—by no means," said Mrs. Brassey. "I thought, perhaps, as I had seen Lady Fitzacre's daughter and yourself, and you seemed so much of an age, that it might have been possible for the young person of the name of—er—er—"

"Smith," suggested Mrs. Blunt.

"Yes—er—for her to be exchanged into another room."

Mrs. Blunt thought that perhaps if her young friend did not object to being separated she might possibly manage it. And really I hoped she would; for any one, even Celia Blang—little spy that she was—would have been better than poor Patty Smith.

"But I really should not like to introduce my dear child here at the expense of doing violence to anybody's feelings," said Mrs. Brassey.

"Oh, no! I know you would not wish that," said Mrs. Blunt; "and really, if Miss Smith objected at all to being removed, I don't think I could—er—I should like to—to—"

"I see, perfectly," said Mrs. Brassey; "and I quite admire and appreciate your system, Mrs. de Blount. But what does my young friend here say—would she object to such a change being made? Would she not miss her friend, the young person of the name of—er—Jones?"

"Smith," corrected Mrs. Blunt; for somehow the vulgarity of the name seemed too much for Mrs. Brassey.

"I should be very glad to see the change," I said.

"And about Miss Fitzacre?" said Mrs. Blunt, with such an air of hypocritical interest, looking all the while so innocent.

"Oh, I'm certain that she would be glad," I said. "In fact, ma'am, I have heard her say so. Miss Smith is very young, ma'am," I said, modestly, "and has never been a companion or friend to us."

And then I felt very much afraid lest Patty should hear of what I had said, and repay me by telling all she knew.

"No; I should never have expected that from what I have seen of your two charming pupils, Mrs. de Blount, that they would have had feelings, sentiments, or emotions in common with a young person of the name of—Jones."

"Then, if your daughter wishes it, my

dear madam," said Mrs. Blunt, "I think we may venture to say that the matter is settled to your satisfaction. "You see," she continued, "that when a new pupil arrives, I look upon mine as quite a maternal charge—one that embraces all that a mother owes to her child, with that of the teacher and trainer of the young and budding intellect."

"Exactly so," said Mrs. Brassey, nodding her head.

"And therefore," continued Mrs. Blunt, apparently much encouraged—"therefore, my dear madam, I try to study their comfort and wishes, even in those which some people might consider trivial things. I study, as far as I can, the present as well as the future; so that when, strong-winged, these young birds take flight, they may always be in their happy futures—"

"Certainly—happy futures," said Mrs. Brassey, nodding her head; "certainly, after such training."

"Happy futures, look back," continued Mrs. Blunt, "to the days when they were at the Cedars, and feel a tear dim their eye's brightness—a tear, not of sorrow, but of regret."

"Very true," said Mrs. Brassey. "I quite agree with you, Mrs. de Blount. Charming sentiments."

"And therefore, you see, had there been any dislike to the alteration upon our young friend's part," said Mrs. Blunt, "I should not have liked to make the change."

Yes, she actually said all that, just as if she believed it, and even smiled at me as she spoke; while, I declare, I almost felt dumb-founded to hear what she said.

The Cedars certainly must have been a most delightful place to motherly eyes, for at every turn, go where we would, Mrs. Campanelle Brassey was lost in admiration, and found everything charming; and she did not scruple to say so, and to such an extent that I grew tired of hearing her; but that did not matter, for there was no getting away; and I had to go with her into the dining-room again to have some cake and wine, which I had to ring for, and then go and sit down by the side of Mrs. Brassey, who seemed to know by instinct which would be the softest couch.

James brought in the wine, and when I was asked, as a matter of course, I ought to have declined, and said, with a display of Cedar deportment, "No, thank you;" but

I did not intend anything of the sort, but said "Yes," for I knew that Mrs. Blunt always had the best sherry brought out for the visitors, and was in consequence terribly stingy over it. So I said, "Yes, if you please," and took a glass, while she was obliged to smile all the time; for I did not mean to be walked about, and talked at, and talked to all day for nothing.

But at last I was set at liberty, and went off to the school-room to discuss the coming of the new girl, who was so handsome and charming in every respect, till Miss Furness returned from the drawing-room, where she had been to be introduced, and desired us to pursue our studies, when, of course, we were all very industrious for quite five minutes.

AN INDIAN POLICE-COURT.

SOME time ago the Indian policeman was introduced to the readers of *ONCE A WEEK*; and though, probably, they were not charmed with the little they saw of that interesting but inefficient official, yet still, perhaps, they may not be disinclined to go a step farther, and enter an Indian police-court. Among all the bungalows in a cantonment, if you select the dirtiest in appearance, the most woebegone, the most ruinous, the one whose compound or garden enclosure is in the most neglected state—full of dust, dead leaves, and rubbish, if it is the hot weather; weeds and rank grass, should it be the wet—that bungalow is pretty certain to be the police-court. It has, most likely, been purchased cheap, or in some way or another come into the hands of Government on honest, but advantageous, terms. Police-courts, even in Christian England, are never very cleanly, desirable-looking buildings; but in most stations in India they are far worse. It is very much to be doubted if the British policeman would not consider it to be an insult to his cloth to be compelled to give evidence in such a disreputable place. He would consider the frame not befitting his noble portrait. The large double gates leading into the compound have probably both disappeared, or, at least, one of them; the other hangs on one hinge, and as soon as it is blown down—as it will inevitably be the next monsoon—will be surreptitiously converted into firewood by the first comers. If there is any important case going on, the compound is

filled with vehicles of every description, from the most rickety hired gharry, or fly, to the smart, newly painted, palankine coach of some well-to-do pleader. The horses are all taken out of the shafts, and are quietly picking up whatever they can find; their attendant horse-keepers and coachmen are lying fast asleep, or else seated on their hams indulging in noisy confabulation, in which the word rupee is heard every few seconds. In various corners may be seen policemen off duty, in great undress, cooking their rice, or else eating it; some have had their dinners brought them by their wives, who squat near them, and amuse their lords and masters with various little choice morsels of home gossip. In the verandah in front of the court are lounging two or three European police officers, superintendents, and inspectors dressed in patrol jackets, white trousers, and helmets; they are very much bronzed as to their complexion, and look as if either they or else some of their ancestors had been a long time in the country. They are all smoking cheroots, and are chatting with acquaintances. Outside the door are numberless shoes, all very much turned up at the toes; these have been left here out of respect to the sanctity of the court. Suddenly a peon, dressed in white, with a scarlet and yellow shoulder-belt, with a brass plate on it—a most imposing-looking personage: quite an Oriental Bumble—rushes out, as the noise in the compound has become unbearable; he cuffs one unfortunate horse-keeper, knocks the turban off another, shouts, gesticulates, making the row tenfold greater. Then, having thoroughly well aired his authority, retires again to his duty inside.

We will raise the bamboo mat that is hung over the doorway in order to keep out the blinding glare of the sun, and step inside.

The room in which we find ourselves bears marks of having formerly belonged to some wealthy civilian or military big-wig. It consists of what has evidently been the drawing-room and dining-room, thrown into one, the partition or screen having been removed. Some side rooms, also, have been added, to increase the accommodation. A railing runs across the upper end of the dining-room, behind which is a high desk for the magistrate. It is covered in with red cloth, to hide, it is to be supposed, the writhings and contortions of his legs during

moments of doubt, or when some knotty point of law has been raised by a troublesome solicitor. In front is a small table for the use of the legal profession, and the reporter or reporters of the station newspaper, should it happen to be so fortunate as to boast of one. In front of this table is a railed-off space, semi-circular in shape, divided into segments, for the witnesses and prisoner. The magistrate is usually honoured with a punkah, and consequently is obliged to keep all his papers and notes arranged under a number of paper weights, otherwise they would soon be flying all over the court. There are a few cane-bottomed seats provided for the use of the spectators, but these are very rickety, and full of large holes, the cane fast disappearing under the continued pickings of nervous and idle fingers.

The floor is covered with matting, but it is in holes, and is apt to upset a belated European witness—you do not often catch a native tripping—causing his entrance into the magistrate's presence not to be marked with too much dignity. The walls have been papered once upon a time, but are now wainscoted some way up with an accumulation of dirt, the result of having innumerable heads and shoulders flattened against them for years. We find most of the benches occupied by natives and half-castes, some of the former seated tailor fashion; the better class, however, adopt the European mode. The air of the court feels close and stuffy, though all the windows and doors are open.

A police-court in England is not particularly pleasant in this respect; but the atmosphere of an Indian one—or, indeed, any place where there is an assemblage of natives, however cleanly they may be in their persons and dress—is outrageous.

On our entry, the two or three policemen who are on duty, with their inseparable staves, salute us; and as we are looking about for vacant seats, and are unable to find any, one of them kindly, by dint of gesticulating violently, and pushing with the end of his staff, clears off a whole benchful. It is not, however, accomplished altogether without remonstrance on the part of the unfortunate natives who have had to move off; but we do not feel any very great qualms of conscience at having thus so unceremoniously ejected them, for in a very few minutes they are comfortably settled:

squatted in their accustomed fashion on the ground. Fancy a policeman at home turning out half a dozen specimens of the British workman, or well-to-do farmer, to make room for some distinguished foreigner! In a corner we catch a glimpse of several native clerks, seated either on the floor or else cross-legged on chairs at tables, filling up forms or summonses. Blotting paper seems to be an unknown article. Sand, being inexpensive, plentiful, and quite as effective, is used. They carry on a buzzing conversation that is endured for some time, and is then summarily put a stop to by the Oriental Bumble.

We have been told that the court would be opened at twelve o'clock—indeed, there is a notice to that effect on a board outside; so we consequently put in an appearance about that hour; but we find that his Honour has not yet arrived, nor, indeed, is there any sign of him.

Unpunctuality seems to be the rule and not the exception, for the solicitors even have not yet taken their seats. However, about half an hour afterwards they drop in one by one.

At last a carriage drives up, and we are told that the Sahib has arrived, but we are not yet awhile to have the pleasure of seeing him, as he goes round to his private room, where he remains for another twenty minutes or so.

At last the door of his room flies open, and first appears the Oriental Bumble, carrying a large envelope box, with as much importance as if it were the crown, on a cushion; then a deputy Oriental Bumble follows, staggering under a fearful load of books and papers; next his Honour. There is a general salute, and the first case is called.

Cantonment magistrates are nearly always military men. As with many other Indian appointments, it is almost impossible to discover what are the particular qualifications requisite for the office; but it is one of the havens of refuge for the storm-tossed staff corps. Interest, no doubt, pilots many a wandering "general duty Wallah" into the magisterial chair.

The berth must be a pleasant one when there are no lawyers to interfere with the dispensing of justice, but such are not often now to be met with. No doubt, justice does not suffer much when there is a lack of the legal profession, as it is dealt out in a rough, even-handed sort of way. Each magistrate

has his own system; and though, perhaps, his method of examining witnesses may not always be legally correct, his decrees are not often reversed, or even appealed against.

How annoying it must be for a magistrate, after having enjoyed his own way uninterrupted for a length of time, to find, one fine morning, his court invaded and his peace of mind upset by the arrival of some sharp solicitor, with any number of precedents at his fingers' ends, and a disgustingly accurate knowledge of the law of evidence!

There is a tale told of a magistrate who, having been recently troubled in this way, complained to a friend.

"I found," he said, "that lawyer fellow differing from me in my own court, and—what do you think?—I actually found he had got a law book."

"And what did you do?" his friend asked.

"Do, sir? Why, I borrowed it of him, and you may be sure the scandal was never repeated."

Another magistrate recently appointed seemed to think it the safest plan always to acquiesce in the objections raised by the Government prosecutor, and to overrule those of the defendant's counsel. It was a pitiable sight, though, to see him wavering, as precedent after precedent was submitted to him by both sides. Gnawing nervously the tip of his pen, he seemed totally unable to give a decision. At last he gave it in favour of the plaintiffs; but, to reconcile his conscience, joyfully acceded to the request of the other side that the objection might be recorded.

On one occasion, he was so led away by the prosecutor for the Crown as to be induced to overrule an objection made by the defendant's counsel regarding the admission of a certain kind of evidence. A short time afterwards the prosecutor himself raised the very same objection to the evidence of the defence; and though it was pointed out to his Honour that he had, in a precisely similar case, just before overruled the objection, he gave it as his opinion that it was valid.

Occasionally a gallant dispenser of justice so far forgets himself as to come the commanding officer over an offending counsel, and then generally he catches a tartar, and has to draw in his horns.

Nevertheless, the fracas gets wind, is copied from the local papers into the prin-

cial Presidency papers, there are two or three slashing articles on military magistrates, and the poor unfortunate wakes up one morning to find himself undesirably famous.

In former days—and it may be so now in some out-of-the-way places in India—the cantonment magistrate was a great blessing to the housekeeper. If you did not care to take the law into your own hands and chastise your servants yourself, all you had to do was to send them under the charge of a policeman to the magistrate, with a polite note specifying the misdemeanours, and requesting that they might have a dozen or so well laid on. Of course they might leave your service rather than undergo the punishment; but they generally preferred the latter to the former alternative.

Though Indian magistrates are fairly paid, they have their work cut out for them.

The difficulties they often experience at arriving at a correct conclusion, after hearing the immense amount of false swearing, is very great. There is no one who can tell a lie and stick to it with greater pertinacity than the Hindu; and if pressed hard—like the cuttle-fish, hidden by its cloud of sepia—he can cover himself under an impenetrable veil of stupidity.

One visit to a police-court in India will be found sufficient, and the curiosity satisfied. No one would care to go as a spectator—or, indeed, in any other capacity—a second time.

ONLY A YEAR.

CHAPTER XXII.

“AS I LIVE, SHE SHALL NEVER DUPE ME TWICE!”

NO wonder Lady Dynesford thought Mr. Thyrlle a very cold, disagreeable kind of young man, for his answers to her affable commonplaces were met by the sternest—once or twice even most irrelevant—of replies.

Phillis, after the first greeting, had found herself utterly unable to speak to him, or even to look up. She *knew* that his eyes were upon her, and she bent her head lower over the table, and spoke in more confidential tones than before to Miss Dynesford. But after a few minutes of this, Thyrlle became impatient. Was this a mere plot to humble him? Had he not seen Phillis leave

the opera last night with Colonel Dynesford—alone? What a fool, a contemptible fool, he had been to come here! His tone was perfectly frigid as he spoke.

“Miss Kyriel, I ought to apologize to you for having come here. I received a note this morning from Mrs. Kyriel, desiring me to do so; if she is unable to see me, I will not interrupt you further.”

Phillis commanded her voice to an indifference which surprised herself, though she dared not look at him.

“My mother will no doubt be here as quickly as she can. I believe she gave orders to be informed of your arrival, should you call.”

“How pale she looks!” thought Thyrlle, even while she spoke. “Can she have been ill? Surely Gilfred would have told me! Ah, Phillis, they were softer eyes than yours now that looked at me as we went together along the lane to Refton Moor—only a year ago! *She* has forgotten—God! what is it these women will not forget? And what a deuced good thing it must be for them that they can!”

Phillis had written a few lines saying where and how she had discovered the letter in the secret drawer, which she enclosed, adding it was the only one she had ever received from him. This she had at hand, and could she be alone with him for a minute, she would force herself to give it to him. So between her anxiety to get rid of her lady friends, and her fear that her mother might come before they went, and that thus she would lose her only chance of an explanation (if indeed there could be any), she became nervous, miserable, desperate. Then she compelled herself to look up. She must see him, perhaps for the last time. Her eyes paused as they encountered two locketts at his watch chain, and a pang of wild jealousy shot through her whole frame. The idea that it could be her own picture which he carried there never entered her mind; but her heart sank—sank. Her hands ceased trembling. She found no difficulty in raising her eyes to his. Yes, he *was* looking at her—looking with the glance a gambler might give to his last handful of gold as he lost it. But meeting her gaze—more icy than her tone—he spoke at once.

“I fear I cannot stay very long—I have an engagement. Perhaps you will be so good as to tell Mrs. Kyriel I regretted I was unable to wait.”

But before he had finished the form of words he was uttering, Mrs. Kyriel entered the room, and, supported by her maid, took her place upon the couch. Looking from the lovely face of Phillis to the lovely face of her mother, Thyrlé was even startled by the likeness so plainly visible now; for now, on the younger face, were the same unmistakable signs of suffering which the other so long had worn, and, as her eyes met her mother's, there was the sweet, patient smile, the look of quiet submission, which was the habitual expression of Mrs. Kyriel, but which he had never seen Phillis wear before.

After a few words to the Dynesfords, Mrs. Kyriel motioned Thyrlé to a chair by her side, and surprised and confounded him by at once, in a low, earnest voice, launching into the most unexpected and undesired flow of gratitude to him for his kindness to her son as well as to herself; saying that she never could hope to repay or thank him as she ought, but that from him she could endure the weight of such heavy obligations; that she had only just heard of all he had done for Gilfred, and how sorry she was that he—Mr. Thyrlé—had been so much occupied since they had been in London—that they had seen so little of him.

Thyrlé looked perplexed, not to say annoyed.

"If this was all, Mrs. Kyriel, I am sorry you had the trouble of sending me a note this morning."

"Oh, I did not," she replied, unguardedly. "It was all dear Phil's thoughtfulness. She wrote it, and sent it before I knew, or was even up. She does everything for me now, you know, that I have lost my little Kittie."

Whereupon Mr. Thyrlé made some polite inquiries after Mr. and Mrs. Brooke, though he was startled to find that the cordial expressions in the note which flashed into his mind had come spontaneously from Phillis. He involuntarily glanced at her.

She had overheard her mother's words; and by an impulse of the strong, perverse woman's pride which urged her to do or say anything rather than betray herself to the keen grey eyes which were so intently watching her, she said to Miss Dynesford, in a voice he could and did easily hear—

"I was so thankful your brother was with me last night. It was so unlucky to feel ill, and would have been awkward if I had been with any one but him."

Thyrlé rose to leave. He had heard and seen quite enough. He felt the pallor sweep across his face, which was the sign in him of fiercest anger; and he controlled his fiery temper—outraged and insulted as he felt—by the strongest effort of his will.

"We shall see you again, I hope, before you leave England," said Mrs. Kyriel, in her sweet, kind voice, as she gave him her hand.

His reply was constrained, even haughty.

"I think not. Indeed, I am certain I shall not come again. I leave as soon as possible, perhaps to-morrow."

Mrs. Kyriel saw with astonishment that Mr. Thyrlé bestowed upon Phillis the same distant bow of farewell which he accorded to Lady Dynesford, and there darted into her mind for the first time a suspicion of a reason for Thyrlé's estrangement. Phillis had refused him! She had once or twice hoped differently during Thyrlé's intimacy at the Manor House; and she sighed as she thought how glad she would have been had he succeeded.

But now Phillis, with her last effort at courage, detained him; and Mrs. Kyriel, with considerable tact, addressed herself to engage the attention of the other visitors.

"Mr. Thyrlé"—poor Phillis knew that her voice now was low and unsteady—"I have to thank you too. I should have been very sorry if my old playfellow, Hasson Grainger, had died alone and miserably. I heard what you did for him from Grace, and from the French doctor to whom we wrote for the little he could tell us."

And she held out her hand.

But at this, which seemed to him the crowning point of her audacity, he forgot himself. He set his teeth hard, like one in pain; the light of anger, which she had once or twice seen blaze at a taunt of Hasson Grainger's, flared in his eyes; and she shrank dismayed from it and his bitter words—

"It is not a difficult thing to me to give a man relief when he is dying, even though he may have offended me often in his life; but a woman who has once deceived me, I never forgive, and, as I live, she shall never dupe me twice."

He utterly disregarded the slender, white hand; and she pressed it hard against her throbbing temples.

"You are mistaken," she faltered, feeling sick with fear and agitation. "Wait five minutes—Mr. Thyrlé!"

Her voice was imploring, but it had no power over him now; and he left the room without another word, or even a second glance at the terrified, pleading eyes.

And then the tension on her nerves, the fictitious strength which had supported her all day and night, gave way suddenly. When the door closed on him she sank on a seat, and as she closed her eyes on the blank prospect of her desolate life, a chill stole over her, and, for the first time in her life, Phillis Kyriel fainted away, sitting quietly in her chair.

CHAPTER XXIII.

"DON'T YOU KNOW THAT I HAVE LOVED YOU ALL THIS TIME?"

ALMOST mad with anger, wounded love, and what he considered unmerited insults, Archer Thyrle strode away from his house in Grosvenor-square. He felt the same sense of suffocation and intolerable desire to give loose to the passion he was stifling, which had mastered him when he nearly flogged Hasson Grainger to death. He walked through the streets, not knowing where he went and caring less, a very hell of wrath and pride raging in his breast. It is hard at all times for a man to be rejected by the woman he really loves. It is seldom the gentlest refusal softens the pain so as to make it endurable. But Thyrle could only feel that he had not been thought worthy of a dismissal. He had been dropped, silently, contemptuously; and the miner's son had courage enough to at least prevent the aristocratic Miss Kyriel from flattering herself that she was able to hurt him.

To ingeniously add to his sufferings, she had produced a successful rival. He could conceive no other reason for the note from Phillis save premeditated insult. She had intended that he should see her with her future mother and sister-in-law (he wondered, with a bitter smile, why the lover had not completed the group)—he should know how little she remembered of the love he had offered her, of the soft looks she had given him in return; and he winced as from the sudden stroke of a knife when before his mind came the look in her pleading eyes as she thanked him for his care of Hasson Grainger.

Yet Thyrle felt a hard satisfaction as he thought of the soft white hand he had refused, and her glance, even of fear, as he told her whom he never forgave. He wished

he could have hurt her more. He felt, in his cruel anger, that he could have crushed those delicate fingers—have given her some cause to fear him, that she should play no more of her cursed jests on him. And he swore he would never look on her treacherous face again, never hear her voice, never think of her; he would go away, far away, where he might avoid the chance of meeting any one who could know her, or of hearing even her name, or that of one belonging to her.

He turned into an unfrequented court, and with unsteady fingers took from his chain the locket containing her photograph. He took the picture out and placed it in his pocket-book, reserving to himself the satisfaction of burning it when he arrived at his hotel; then, glancing round to be sure that he was unperceived, he ground the trinket to powder under his heel, and stamped over the shrine which had held the fair face, the mud and dirt of the city pavement.

Somewhat relieved by this exercise, he went on his way. Yet her last imploring accents rang in his ears; her words of thanks pursued him, reminding him, against his will, of Hasson Grainger. And presently his hot indignation became cooler; his thoughts softened a little as he remembered Hasson, lying so weak, so helpless, imploring his forgiveness.

"My God! who am I that I should forgive or refuse forgiveness?" he exclaimed, with sudden shame.

Who was he who raged and hated more like a wild beast or a devil than a man in the image of God? Other men, greater and better than he, had before now lost their hearts' desire—aye, perhaps even twice in a lifetime, as he had; yet had taken a nobler course than to curse God and the hopes that were gone. He calmed down by degrees, forcing himself to remember his old companion's death, rather than his own recent wrongs. Then he recollected that Hasson had told him to take something from his lodgings in Norfolk-street. It was a chest, he had said, or a box, which was to be opened. Thinking that it would be something to do, and that perhaps he ought to obey this hitherto forgotten injunction, Thyrle summoned a hansom, and was driven to the place indicated, where, after various representations, references, and a little ready money, the box was delivered into his custody. He then drove

to his hotel, had it taken to his room and forced open.

Among a variety of letters and papers, strange enough in their way, Thyrlé suddenly came upon a thick bundle of letters, the outside one of which was addressed, in his own handwriting, to Miss Kyriel. In painful excitement he tore the packet open—and understood all!

Here were his unanswered letters! Here his vain appeals, his indignant remonstrances! And here was her passionate entreaty for even a word! He could scarcely control his terrible agitation, when he read what he ought to have read so long ago—"For God's sake write to me—write anything." Unable to finish the letter—for he felt stifling, choking with his conflicting fears and emotions—he threw them all back into the box, and returned to the street. Then, ordering the man to drive for his life, and utterly forgetting his rash oath to see the woman he loved no more, he went through an agony of suspense and remorse until he sprang out at the door he had left but two or three hours before in his blind anger.

"Miss Kyriel is in her room, sir," the old butler replied to his eager questions. "She was taken ill—a fainting fit, I believe."

"Let me see Mrs. Kyriel," exclaimed Thyrlé, alarmed, and yet not knowing what most to fear.

"She is very bad too, sir. She was frightened when Miss Kyriel fainted, and Sir Anthony has been with her this hour or more."

"Send Miss Kyriel's maid to me, in the drawing-room."

And he went to the room, intending to write a few lines to Phillis; but found, when he attempted to do so, that it was impossible for him to command either his hand or his thoughts.

The girl Andrews came to him, and he asked her if her mistress was up, if it was possible for her to see him for even a few minutes—one minute. It was of the greatest importance. And the maid, finding a handful of silver and gold in her grasp, answered demurely that Sir Anthony had ordered her young lady to be kept very quiet; that he said she had been dreadfully over-excited and frightened; but that perhaps if she heard it was Mr. Thyrlé she would see him. It was just after he left that she fainted.

"Stay, my girl," he exclaimed, his face clearly betraying that he, too, thought he had had a hand in her sudden illness; "tell her—tell her from me—that—there has been a mistake—a fearful mistake—ask her to forgive me; and, above all, to see me, if only this once."

An interval followed the girl's departure of the suspense which is intolerable torture to quick, impetuous natures like Thyrlé's. He could not remain still; and, on walking up to a table saw there, by his own fireside—and worse, lying close by a workbox which he knew belonged to Phillis—a photograph of Colonel Dynesford's handsome face.

"God help me, I am too late!" he exclaimed.

How was he to know that Lady Dynesford had presented this to Mrs. Kyriel, or that young ladies do not leave things so precious as their lovers' portraits casually about on their drawing-room tables? He could only think of what he had lost, and that if she even yet loved him it was equally hopeless. When he had arrived at being utterly miserable and desperate, Phillis entered the room—slowly. Pausing at the head of the first sofa she came to, she leant against it. Thyrlé advanced quickly, and, taking both her hands in his, looked down into her face as if his life depended on what he read there; but he could not speak, he dared not—so much would be decided by her first words. She was half frightened when she met his eager glance of terrible anxiety, and drew away her hands.

He found she had left in his a folded paper, and was urging him to read. He controlled himself, opened it, and saw the letter she had found in the *escritoire*. He looked up from it with eyes of wild inquiry.

"Where did you get this?" he exclaimed. "It has never been posted! Where did you find it?"

"I found it last night, in a secret drawer in an old-fashioned *escritoire*, which opened by chance. It is the only letter," and great tears rose slowly to her eyes, "that has ever come to me from you."

The scene in his little smoking-room—the drawer he had come back to shut, the unexpected presence of his aunt—all returned with strange force to his mind.

"My God, how I have been deceived! I

see it all now. Phillis, my darling, what have you to tell me? Am I too late? Are you going to marry Colonel Dynesford?"

Her pale cheeks flushed suddenly, and her long lashes fell; but her hands, though cold and trembling, were again in his.

He went on, quickly—

"Phillis, I never heard from you. I waited, and wrote in vain to you. My cursed pride prevented me from going to you, to see and hear for myself, and I thought you only meant to fool me—to punish the presumption of the miner's son. So I went away. It has been my aunt's doing and Hasson Grainger's. Don't tell me it is too late! I behaved like a brute this afternoon, but I can't tell you what I went through. Only forgive me!—only tell me, are you engaged to this Dynesford?"

"No, thank God!"

And she looked up and met his eyes, humbly, yet glad, with a great gladness such as she had thought she should never know again in this world.

"You will try again to care for me?" he said, earnestly. "Don't send me away any more. Phillis, you do love me? Ah, my darling, no pride, no estrangement can ever come between us again."

For, in the fulness of her joy and gratitude, she let him take her in his arms, and submitted as she never had before while he kissed her trembling lips. Then, leaning her tired head against his shoulder, she murmured such words as he had coveted to hear—

"I am so happy now, so much happier than I ever thought I could be. I was foolish and self-willed, and I am full of faults; but it has been only this last year that I found it out. It is only a year, though it seems a lifetime—it has taught me such hard lessons. Archie, don't you know that I have loved you all this time—ever since I first saw you?"

As the answer to this was quite as foolish as the question, it will be seen that enough of this conversation has been recorded; but it was to that year in the lives of Phillis and Archer Thyrle which ends here that they owe the happiness which followed in after and brighter ones—from that year that they both involuntarily date the beginning of better things.

THE END.

TABLE TALK.

THE new garden which has displaced the abomination of desolation in Leicester-square has been transferred from the hands of the donor, Mr. Albert Grant, to the Metropolitan Board of Works, for the use and benefit of the public in general, and the inhabitants of the neighbourhood in particular. Where the famous equestrian statue stood till it tumbled down bit by bit—or perhaps was assisted in its fall by idle hands, for which the demon of mischief might have devised a less pardonable act of destruction—there is now a monument which none but the most barbarous would dream of defiling. Where rank weeds grew in scrubby patches smooth verdure spreads an inviting carpet, trim gravel paths wind in graceful curves, ornamental shrubs are disposed at regular intervals, and flowers bloom. Where discarded hats and shoes, and pots and kettles, with a score of other despicable objects, were thrown at random, statuary and garden ornament of every welcome kind are placed in symmetrical order. Where rusty and broken iron railings straggled, with wide gaps in the tottering palisade, a boundary has been erected. The architect has done his best; and round his main device a worthy assemblage of formative designs has been judiciously brought together—marble fountain, with basin and flower vases, and a group of dolphins which are made to spout their upward streams from the blow-holes with which all marine mammalia are provided. At all times the design will please, both on its own merit and as a pedestal for the Shakespeare statue, copied or adapted by Signor Fontana from the figure by Roubillac in the British Museum. The busts which severally adorn the four corners of the enclosure are those of Sir Joshua Reynolds, Sir Isaac Newton, William Hogarth, and John Hunter, the four worthies whose historical relationship to the square is most prominent in the national regard. Now comes a question. Can the square be kept tidy; and the dirty little ragamuffins who turn that of Trafalgar into a disreputable playground, foul its fountains, chalk its pavements, hustle the passers-by, and generally "rough" it, be kept at a distance?

Terms of Subscription to ONCE A WEEK, free by post:—Weekly Numbers for Six Months, 5s. 5d.; Monthly Parts, 5s. 8d.

ONCE A WEEK

NEW SERIES.

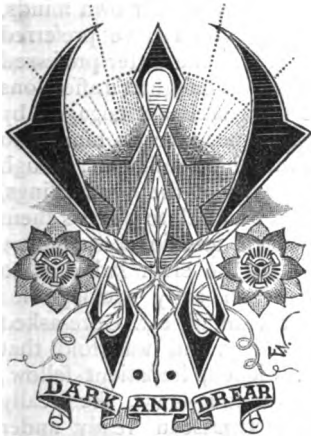
No. 343.

July 25, 1874.

Price 2d.

JACK'S SISTER; OR, WOMANLY PAST QUESTION.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.
DARK DAYS.



WHILE Merle was thus drifting along that honey-scented stream which, strewn with "roses and raptures," flows over dark boulders downwards to the "Mare Averni," life

at Marshton Fallows was slowly settling down into a dead, grey monotony. For a short time, indeed, the old-fashioned town was in quite a whirl of excitement, from the various stories circulating about the family who were always considered as the leading people in the place, and whose honoured name was looked up to by rich and poor alike.

First it was rumoured that Jack Leyburn's betrothed was carrying on a clandestine flirtation with young Mr. Gore, the member's son. Next, that the engagement was broken off, and Miss Delamayne sent home to her father in disgrace. Next, that young Gore and she had run away with each other, and Sir Henry had cut his son off with a shilling. And last, that Miss Delamayne and Jack Leyburn had never been engaged at all; but that, knowing his friend's love for the

girl, and that his parents would not sanction it, Jack, impelled by the romantic attachment always existing between him and young Gore, had invited Baby on a visit, and introduced her as his betrothed, in order to give scope for the courtship and elopement; that Sir Henry had, in consequence, withdrawn his account from the old bank, and all communication ceased between the Hall and Cedars.

In every bushel of lies there are some grains of truth. Likewise, in most bushels of truth there are some grains of lies. In this case the lies can be easily sifted; and of the truth, the only part which requires mentioning is that relating to Mr. Gore and his family.

Clifton and Baby were married. From the moment of reading that short letter from his friend, which began "Sir" and signified in about ten words, every one of which fell like a drop of frozen fire upon the sore and guilty conscience, that having ascertained that Mr. Gore had persuaded Miss Delamayne to receive him as a suitor without regard to any previous ties she might have made, and that she had given her consent to that effect, he (Jack) would of course resign all claim to the young lady; and having returned her with every care, and under his sister's protection, to her father's house, would simply reserve to himself the right of insisting that, as Mr. Gore had elected to compromise the young lady's name in the most public and damaging manner, while under the protection of his friend's roof, he should redeem his character as a gentleman by making her his wife as speedily as possible; Mr. Leyburn need hardly add that all acquaintance between Mr. Gore and the family at the Cedars must of necessity come to an end from that day and henceforward;—from the moment of reading this curt and formal epistle, I say, Clif had given himself up with a sort of dogged recklessness to carry out the demand con-

tained in it. One attempt he did make at seeing his friend; but this being rebuffed with stern decision, he set his teeth hard, and sitting down to his desk, wrote to Baby at St. Leonard's asking her to be his wife. I wonder whether the days which intervened between that letter and its answer were spent in praying that the latter might be a refusal? Men have done so before now, and been disappointed, as he was. Promptly Baby's answer came, written on scented, creamy paper, gushingly effusive, unhesitatingly acquiescent. Merle would have cursed the writer for thus ruining his life. Clif only folded up the perfumy epistle with a long, weary sigh.

"Poor little girl!" he said, sadly. "Poor little, pretty, foolish girl! Well, I suppose she does love me. I had half hoped—but that's over now. Everything's over but to show him I'm not going to play a black-guard's part by her. He might have seen me once; but I suppose he was right, and that I'd have done the same in his place. His place! Fancy him in mine! Poor Jack—poor old fellow! It's hard enough for him; but at least he don't suffer from having been the confounded fool I am. And she never loved him. She said so—not to him, though. Would to Heaven she had! Ah, well, it don't do to think about that now. All I've got to do is to marry her, and make her as happy as I can. I had better get it over with the governor now."

And going downstairs, slowly and heavily, as a man on his way to execution, Clif knocked at the library door.

I pass over the scenes which followed. That Sir Henry and Lady Gore would consent to the marriage with Baby Delamayne was not to be expected. The former refused to do so at once, without any circumlocution. He would not hear of such a thing. For once in her life, Lady Gore followed suit, and joined issue against her son. She would rather never see him again than see him as the husband of Baby Delamayne. That he, who had been her idol, should have wronged his friend so vilely was terrible enough; but to ask his mother's consent to profit by that wrong! He was mad to ask it! And Clif heard them both in silence, taking the full blame on himself, so as to shield his frail love as much as possible; and simply asserting that whatever his previous conduct might have been, his marriage was in obedience to

Jack Leyburn's wishes. Sir Henry, on this plumply told him that he lied; and Clif left the house at once.

Without further delay, he went down to St. Leonard's, saw Baby, and, after telling her of his parents' refusal to consent to their union, asked her whether she would not prefer her freedom to a marriage without it; and on only £500 a year—his own private income.

Again Baby disappointed him, and said £500 with him would be Paradise to her.

Also Lenore, Maude, and Kitty opened their arms to him as a brother.

Also Mrs. Delamayne, with a view to paternal relentings and the title in prospect, blessed him as a son.

Also Mr. Delamayne said that, though he was very angry with his daughter, and though girls ought to know their own minds, &c., and though he would have preferred young Leyburn, still, as the latter professed himself satisfied, and his daughter's affections seemed to have been seriously engaged by Mr. Gore, he would not take on himself to forbid her union with that gentleman; though he could not approve of the proceedings, and, indeed, was too unwell to discuss them further. After which, and in consequence of hints dropped by the elder ladies as to the advisability of an early marriage for preventing further scandal, Mr. Gore asked Baby to name the day, and was told that he was a dear, wicked, impatient fellow; and that she couldn't—no, she really *couldn't*, have her trousseau ready under a month.

On that day four weeks, Clif stood at Baby Delamayne's side before the altar in Hollingwood Church, the curate presiding—the Rev. Paul was still too unwell (?); and before evening he had departed with his bride for the Continent.

Heavily fell the clouds over the Cedars now.

High words had been spoken between Jack and Sir Henry; for the latter, enraged by his son's obstinacy, went off to the bank to reproach the author of it; and Jack, already stung beyond endurance, had taken reproaches the reverse of mildly. Bitter things were said on either side, and the gentlemen parted without shaking hands; although Sir Henry did not, as was reported, think it necessary to withdraw his money from a bank where it was so safely invested.

The Leyburns saw no more of him. Lady Gore had been taken very ill; and after one tender, sorrowful little letter to Enid, she was carried away by Sir Henry to the Isle of Wight, and the Hall shut up till Easter.

It made little difference to the family at the Cedars. Jack had sunk into a mood of stern, silent gloom, which admitted of no softening. Indeed, some peevish laments from Aunt Jane, on the wickedness of the girl who had led away her particular favourite among mankind, provoked such a burst of invective against the latter, and such a renewed declaration that treachery like his should go unforgiven though the traitor were on his deathbed, that for the future Jack's orders were obeyed, and Clifton's name buried in a silence deep as the grave. The young master of the house was not often to be found in it now. He slaved away at the bank with a dogged pertinacity and a rigid discipline which disgusted the clerks, who had anticipated light and easy times with so young a chief; went for long solitary rides in the afternoon, and only returned in time for a dinner eaten in almost total silence, and from which he and his cigars retreated to the study for the rest of the evening.

One or two visitors who did come across him were quite electrified by his surly moroseness; and as Enid declined to atone for her late independence of speech by apologizing, and giving a full, true, and particular account of what had befallen, she too fell into bad odour with the neighbours; and the great iron knocker at the Cedars resounded so seldom, that, but for the name of it, Miss Leyburn and her niece might have been a brace of Protestant nuns. It was in these sad days that Enid wrote to Merle for sympathy. His rebuff did not tend to make them brighter.

And it was still in the first year of her mourning—barely twelve months since that happy week when Jack and Cliff came back from their Continental ramblings!

She bore up very bravely. Her poor people were never more constantly visited, her schools more zealously taught. Aunt Jane was fairly nursed and coaxed into reviving health; and as for Jack—if I could tell you all the little wiles employed to please or cheer him, you would think the young lady a female Macchiavelli. She used to study the papers for one thing, dive deep into politics, investigate the blundering of the school board

commissioners, and coach herself up on the never-failing "Sir Roger," in order to be able to furnish her brother with "sensible" conversation at meals. She braved the worst weather with petitions to join in his rides; and never grumbled though his lips were not unclosed the whole way. She went down into the kitchen to herself superintend the concoction of extra delicacies for the tempting of his palate; and—crowning sacrifice of womanhood—she actually asked him to smoke in her drawing-room!

For all this she got no thanks, and expected none—Jack being even entirely unconscious of the feminine propitiatory machinations going on about him. Also she got no good; and, though sorely disappointed, hid her defeat under a cheerful exterior, and tried again.

Of Clifton and Baby she never willingly thought. A great gulf had opened between her and the former, a gulf which might never be crossed; and the pitiful yearnings of her heart were silenced with a stern decision which made her appear as unforgiving as her brother. Indeed, Aunt Jane, who still moaned in private over the culprit, thought her niece rather hard on this score, and told her so; adding that if Enid had not made the poor fellow desperate by her rejection, he could never have got into such evil courses. To her great surprise, the young woman addressed burst into a most unwonted passion of tears:

"Oh, auntie, don't say so!—don't put it into my head! Make any other excuses for him you like, but not that. He never loved me really, or he could not have ceased—have changed so soon. Oh! I am glad of it—that he did not; that no one has loved me like Merle—poor Merle!"

Enid actually incoherent! Aunt Jane simply stared in rebuking surprise, and after the lapse of a minute or two, observed sedately that she thought her niece had better take ten drops of sal volatile in a table spoonful of cold water; such hysterical exhibitions being unsuitable and unbefitting any one, more especially a young lady brought up under her training.

Enid apologized meekly.

"And really, I think you should take a pill to-night, my dear—one of Hunt's," Aunt Jane went on. "You have been looking very flushed and unlike yourself for some time—probably bile; and if one doesn't do, take two."

Enid acquiesced.

It is worthy of remark that Aunt Jane had said nothing vituperative of Merle when his name was thus dragged in. A short time ago, this would not have happened; but one of the strongest signs which Enid had shown of being "unlike herself," was a tendency to fly out if anything against her lover was hinted to or before her, and with such vigour that even Aunt Jane was startled into abstinence on that particular topic. I am sorry to have to record this of my heroine, as I believe I have hitherto extolled her for possessing an unusually sweet and even temper. Truth is truth, and on this point Enid had certainly become wonderfully touchy of late.

Can any of my women readers guess the reason why?

Little by little, and day by day, a terrible fear was growing on her, a black cloud looming in the horizon, and slowly, very slowly, spreading and drawing nearer; so that it required all her skill and resolution to shut her eyes to its approach, or retreat from its advance. And yet, when had it begun? Over and over again she asked herself that question, and found no reply. It seemed to her now nothing extraordinary to be kept two or even three weeks waiting for one of the letters which used to come so often; and when it came, to be cut to the heart by the contents. There was not much of them, certainly: twenty lines scrawled over a sheet of note paper, telling nothing and asking nothing, often ending abruptly with a blotted initial; and all—every one—showing a flip-pant indifference and a general lowering of tone which made it hard to believe that they were written by the same man who used to fill four or five sheets with confidential out-pourings and passionate affection, the lad to whom from childhood she had so lovingly devoted herself.

No one but Enid herself and the God above ever knew what she endured, without outward sign or show, from these letters; and the defalcation, not only from herself, but from all things good and true to which they testified. She said nothing, not even to Merle. Perhaps, with regard to him, it would have been better if she had; but having always heard that women's reproaches and complaints were the surest way of destroying love, and regarding Merle's peculiarities of temper as especially requiring tenderness and indulgence, she

carefully abstained from word or comment which should seem to savour of blame, by even betraying her own suffering; and contented herself with answering them promptly, and praying for the absent one with such fervour, such earnest entreating, and pitiful tears, as had probably never entered into her orisons before. Still, her letters were not as they had used to be; it was not to be expected.

She could not now volunteer all the little home details and innocent gossip which were never asked for, and seemed to have lost all interest. Neither could she enter into his life as formerly, now that she knew nothing of it—knew not even where he lived; for of late he had mentioned, very curtly, the fact of having left his old lodgings, and instead of giving her the address of the new ones, had desired her to write to the club. She could not ask questions about his pursuits, or intentions, when his studied reserve on such topics was sufficient indication to a refined mind that he preferred to keep them to himself; nor could she even ask for sympathy in any of her own troubles, after the rebuff she had received for doing so. And so she merely wrote at intervals a brief, kind letter replying to his, and mentioning any little facts which she thought might possibly please or amuse him; such a letter, in fact—cheerful, but brief and slightly constrained—as any cousin might write to another with whom she was not very intimate. How she hated them herself! How she longed for even one of his old outbursts of jealousy or anger to break down this skim of formality freezing between them, and force a full and free explanation, which should give scope to the love yearning and trembling in her own heart.

By and by that hope was silenced. The end, so long foreshadowed, came at last; and with as sudden and crushing a power as though she had had no forewarning of its advent.

Merle had an enemy, and that enemy was only biding his time.

It was one day in autumn. There was no great press of business at the bank; and for some days past Jack's moodiness had been showing itself in a reckless desire to get away somewhere, anywhere for a fortnight's holiday. He was getting sick of the place, he said; and his womenfolk agreed that he wanted a change—Enid boldly suggesting

Paris as the gayest place she could think of; and making as many playful jests on the accession of Palais Royal jewellery which she should expect from the visit as though no dead weight of anxiety were lying at her heart all the time.

"By the way, if Merle were not just going up for his ordination he might run down to enliven you," Jack said, with some consideration for the young woman who was so cheerfully speeding his amusement. "Has he heard of a likely curacy yet?"

"No—at least, I don't think so."

And Enid blushed up as hotly as though she were a schoolgirl of fifteen and Merle a recent admirer.

"I dare say I shall look in at him, passing through London," Jack persisted, with unwonted volubility. "I suppose he's still at the old place? I never hear from him."

"Oh, you'll find him at the club best," Enid put in hurriedly, and conscious that she was guilty of something like equivocation. "Do go and see him, Jack—you must; and tell him to come here, if it is only for a day or so," she added.

And Jack, whose momentary sociability had been overcast by the sight of an old music book of Clifton's lying on the hall table, only grunted in assent, and left the house.

That was in the morning. The same evening he received a letter which turned him purple and almost foaming with suppressed rage. He said nothing about it, however; but briefly announced that he was going up to London that night, and, without a word of explanation of any sort, departed.

He did not come home till late on the following evening; and Enid, who had passed the last twenty-four hours in an utterly causeless state of sick, nervous anxiety, felt no surprise when, without a syllable of greeting, he marched into the room, took her into his arms, and kissed her twice, hard—his face fixed and rigid as a stone.

"Something has happened, Jack?" she said, looking up into his eyes with a shrinking, terrified appeal.

"Yes," he said. "There was no one else in the room, and he put her back into her chair, ere replying—"So much, that you and Merle Kinnardson must never meet again. Read that."

And so, without a word of softening, put a long, closely written letter in his sister's hands.

She opened it, glanced at the pages, turned to the signature—"T. Middlemist"—and then looked up piteously at her brother, with a blank, troubled look, and held the letter to him.

"I can't read it—tell me, Jack," she said, shivering.

And Jack took back the paper, and told her.

It was a bad story anyhow. It sounded worse in those stern lips, and to that pure hearing. Deeply in debt, hopelessly entangled with some actress of light repute, never absent from her side, his profession insulted and relinquished, his residence unknown, his intimates the fastest and most dissipated men in London—could anything be worse? And it was all true.

"I went up to see for myself," Jack said. "Saw his tradesmen; Middlemist, who wrote this; Cloughton, his best friend, who, though a clever fellow, is one of the greatest rakes going; and Drugh, a professed infidel and libertine, and a rival of his for this girl's favour. He actually gave up the church because she wouldn't have him at one of her suppers without a pledge to that effect. He parades himself with her. A thousand a year would hardly cover the rate he is living at. Enid, do you hear? All, every shadow of connection must be over between you. The man is not fit to come inside these doors, after such ingratitude. Why do you look in that way? Can't you understand? He has disgraced himself and you irretrievably."

"Jack!" she began, appealingly, and stopped.

She had sat silent before, looking at him with the wide, pitiful eyes of some dumb and harmless animal cruelly tortured. Even now her voice sounded faint and weak.

"Did you see him?"

"No. I couldn't trust myself so far. If he were only a bigger man," and the young Goliath ground his teeth. "But I could kill that miserable cur with one blow; and—he knows it."

She shuddered, and put out one hand deprecatingly.

"Can't there be any explanation? Oh!"—as his brows came together with angry impatience—"don't be angry with me, Jack. I'm very silly, I don't know much about men; but every one says their temptations are stronger than ours, and some of these—these actresses are very clever. Let me write to him, and beg him to tell you every-

thing. There might be some excuse. It all seems so wrong, so terrible; but—but if I only were hurt I could forgive him, be his sister still, even if I might not be his wife; and—Jack, a man may always repent—”

Jack interrupted her, with angry impatience—

“Repent! Forgive! Are you infatuated, that a rat like that can make you lose all sense of womanly dignity? I thought girls like you were so pure! ‘*You only hurt!*’ Why, do you know who this actress is? Upon my word, I thought the rest would have been enough without going into that.”

And without more preamble, he blurted out the story of Minnie Bruce, giving it that darker colouring which Merle’s own selfish reticence had made current. Long before he had finished, Enid’s face had blanched to the whiteness of death, her whole body seemed to droop forward, and her clasped hands loosened and fell nervelessly at her side, like one stricken by a mortal blow.

“And to think of the scoundrel who did that daring to brazen it out; and come here to you—to— Good heavens! if I don’t half kill him,” Jack burst out at the end.

Enid looked up, her great dark eyes dim and hollow—

“No,” she said, slowly. “You will not—for my sake. He must be left to God. You were right always.” And she stood up, weak and unsteady, and laid one hand on her brother’s arm, as if to hold to him. “It must be all over. I could have forgiven anything; but—”

She stopped short, shivering in every limb; and Jack put his arm round her, kindly, and half in fear that she would faint.

“Thank you,” she said, gratefully, her weary young head drooping against his shoulder. “Jack, you are wiser than I. I’m very weak; but I will do just what you tell me—only don’t blame him. Don’t say anything harsh. It will only harden him, and hurt me, for I loved him. Oh, Jack, dear, I loved him so much! I love him still, for I know how miserable such a man must be; and I can do nothing more—nothing more to help him now.”

And then she began to cry, not violently, but with fast scalding tears, and sobs which shook even the strong man who held her. She had given all—love, confidence, and fidelity; and it had been poured to waste upon the desert sand.

A BATTLE WITH THE SIKHS.

BY AN OLD SOLDIER.

AS the cold season of 1845 advanced, it was impossible for the most peaceably disposed not to see that an outbreak between us and the Sikhs over the river had become unavoidable. Umballah, one hundred and fifty, and Loodianah, eighty miles distant, were both strengthened, and two more regiments of native infantry and artillery were moving up towards us. I had, however, but little time to take note of warlike movements, having the superintendence of more than 500 native workmen, the repairing and strengthening the defences of an old native fort in the town of Ferozepore being part of my duties. In this fort a wing of a native infantry regiment was stationed, with some native artillery, and strong pickets of cavalry all round the station, as the news from Lahore became gradually more and more threatening. Late in November, the alarm gun at the fort was fired at ten in the evening by the stupidity or cowardice of the officer, and our whole force had quickly turned out under arms. None were surprised at its being a false alarm, midnight attacks not being much in vogue amongst the natives; but all knew that now it was merely a question of days.

It was on the afternoon of, I think, the 12th of December that my officer met me in the magazine, and asked me where was my horse. On my replying that it was lame—it was fairly broken down with hard work—he rode off, having a large augur attached to his sword belt. At Khoonda Ghât, three miles distant, was a fleet of boats, arrived from Bombay a short time before, for the purpose of bridging the river. In twelve of these boats were carronades mounted on slides—twelve-pounders. For the protection of these boats three companies of native infantry had been posted; but on the rumour of a Sikh force having crossed the river higher up, these three companies had been called in, leaving the boats unprotected.

This was where the executive engineer was going this evening, quietly and by himself—where it was not considered safe to leave three hundred infantry, and near where some of our grass-cutters had been killed a short time before; and here he sank the twelve armed boats by boring holes in their bottoms with the augur—

an effectual precaution easily remedied some two months afterwards, when they were required for their original purpose. The next morning the whole of the engineer establishment mustered in strength, with two companies of Sappers, and some magazine carts; and by working in the boats up to our waists in water, we dismounted the guns, and brought them into cantonments in safety. When we returned we found all in a bustle; scores of hackeries, all laden with furniture, were converging from all points to the gates of the entrenchment, where all the officers' and soldiers' wives and families were taking refuge.

The rumours of yesterday had now become confirmed truth, and 40,000 Sikhs had crossed the river at Hurreeke Ghât, some few miles above, and were expected hourly to advance upon the cantonments.

Of course this put a stop to the public works, and I was appointed to a rocket battery, hastily formed from the headquarters staff of the Horse Artillery just arrived, and half an unattached company of Foot Artillery; and the whole of our little army moved out, and encamped a mile to the eastward of cantonments, having the entrenchment in our rear. Here we were kept on the tiptoe of expectation for some four or five days, each day adding some thousands to the native reports (exaggerated, no doubt) of the large force crossing, and still to cross, the river; and on the 18th we all turned out, and formed lines some distance in front of our tents, a large body of the enemy passing southward about two miles from our front. Our rocket battery was rather in advance of the line, and I turned with pride to look at our somewhat imposing force of seven thousand—more than twice the number with which Clive won Plassy—and wondered why the General was so inactive while the enemy could be seen passing by in the distance. The General and his staff were on the right, inspecting them with their telescopes; our rocket tubes were also in position; and I wondered at our not getting an order to send them some thirty-two pounders, which would have reached them easily enough. Before many days were over, I had reason to congratulate myself that the General had kept on the defensive, allowing them to pass quietly.

When the army of observation had assembled at this place at the close of the

Cabul war, Lord Ellenborough had ordered Lieutenant Irvin, then executive engineer, to throw up an entrenched work for the small force left to fall back upon in case of need. It was not founded strictly in accordance with the science of fortification, and it was nicknamed Fort Ellenborough. It was armed with twenty-three guns and howitzers, and within it had gradually collected an immense magazine of stores, and it was this entrenched work that saved Ferozepore. On this occasion, Lall Singh, the Sikh commander, had been told that the whole of the outworks of the entrenchment had been undermined; and having, fortunately for us, a wholesome dread of modern engineering, he preferred meeting the Commander-in-Chief in fair fight, rather than our little force behind the mud entrenchments, to which we should surely have been driven amongst the women and children; and at dusk in the evening we returned to our tents with a negative triumph, leaving our safety to the vigilance of the pickets.

On the evening of the 20th, the news was whispered through the camp that headquarters had been engaged, and General McCaskill killed; and all were to be in marching order one hour before daylight in the morning.

Very cold it was on the morning of the shortest day in 1845, and we were on the ground some time before the order of march could be arranged. Some sappers, artillery, and a regiment of infantry were left behind to keep the entrenchments and the fort at the old town, and the rest—about 7,000 of all arms—marched towards Loodianah. We soon came into the track of the enemy, and there were traces of a numerous and very heavy ordnance, the wheels of which had deeply indented the plain in many places—strictly scrutinized by us artillerymen.

It got very warm before the middle of the day; our water was exhausted, and there were no wells on the way to give a fresh supply—the dust causing us to suffer very much from thirst.

Not having any baggage, we got on at the rate of three miles an hour, but several halts were made to keep the rear well closed up. By the middle of the day our halts became more frequent, and our videttes and advanced guard more on the alert; and at length we formed junction with the Commander-in-Chief right in front of, and at about a mile distance from, the enemy's

camp. Captain Richardson was quickly called to the Governor-General, who wanted information as to the resources of the Ferozepore magazine, and we never saw him afterwards; and so our rocket battery, which I was fully assured would be mentioned in general orders as having greatly contributed, &c., &c., was rendered ineffective, and I was reduced to being merely a looker-on. Mr. Lamb, a warrant officer, was next in command, and our battery consisted of twelve cartloads of rockets in magazine carts, drawn by bullocks, and four rocket tubes; and my particular charge was two carts, one rocket tube, and eight men.

After a halt of half an hour, we advanced directly on the front of the enemy's camp, and the battle was commenced by a general attack from our Horse Artillery and light field batteries, quickly replied to by the heavier metal of our opponents; and then the infantry were gradually advanced, and with them went our rockets, and we were soon under a fire heavier than had ever entered into my imagination before.

I was in one of the carts, busy uncapping some twelve-pound rockets for immediate use as I thought, and from this slight elevation had a good opportunity of looking around. The Ferozepore division had formed the left wing of the army, and had been opposed to the right of the enemy's camp; on our extreme right were her Majesty's 62nd Regiment, and between them and us the 12th and 14th Native Infantry—at least, all of them that had not fallen to the rear. Long before we came within musket shot, the Sepoys were falling to the rear by dozens, and lying down at the roots of the dwarf trees with which the plain was dotted here and there; even behind bunches of madder some had lain down, with others again at their feet, thus making the bodies of their comrades a slight shelter from the big shot. I asked one group why they lay there, and they said they were tired. I tried to drive the kranchy wheels over another lot, but they only got up and lay down again after the cart had passed. My first look-out was for my own troop, some distance on the right; but I could only see a cloud of smoke and dust, which would clear away just enough for me to see as through a hole one gun, which would belch out fire, and then all was again shrouded in smoke. On our left was Captain Fordyce's bullock battery, pouring shell and grape into

a cloud of Sikh horsemen, conspicuous from their white clothing and red turbans, and who were backed by a lot of camel men, with their swivel guns throwing bullets of large size.

On the left of Fordyce's battery were more regiments of native infantry, and then other artillery, in a cloud of smoke, finished my view. Now I knew—or rather, I thought—that if this body of cavalry made a charge on the battery, the Sepoys would not stand, and that the guns would be taken. In this I might have been mistaken. It is impossible to calculate on Sepoys, who on some occasions will fight as well as a European; but, from the hundreds already fallen to the rear, it was plain that they were out of heart. All at the front were busy excepting ourselves. The different sounds of the big guns and the light field-pieces, the constant rattle of the musketry, and the wailing and hissing of the bullets as they came from a greater or a less distance, and the *krar-ar-ar* of the large shot as they passed over our heads—far above all these and other sounds that I should fail to describe arose the British cheers that always prelude a bayonet charge; and looking to the right, I saw the 62nd Wiltshire Springers advancing at the double, and, as may be supposed, I had no eyes for anything else. I stood up on the edge of the cart, clenched my fists, and, with my heart in my mouth, felt ready to laugh and to cry while I watched those glorious fellows go in. Now the guns in front of them belch out fire and smoke, and there are gaps in the red line; but before the smoke has cleared away they are in amongst the guns fighting with the Sikh artillerymen, and I watch the face of the camp here, where there is some confusion, and then they retire in some disorder. They were brigaded with two Sepoy regiments, and the Major-General had ordered a charge of the whole; but the Sepoys not backing up the 62nd as they should have done, the Brigadier ordered a retreat, while the Major-General's bugle was still sounding the advance, causing a hesitation quickly taken advantage of by the enemy, whose greatest strength was at this point—who advanced, regained the guns, and fought them for some time after.

We had held our own on the left, but it was very warm work. Several bullocks had been shot: one was being disengaged from my cart when a ginal ball struck both

the driver's legs below the knee, the bones snapping like sticks.

The firing had slackened considerably before dark, and the right of the camp was in our possession. With darkness came the cold, and the men got a temporary warmth by lighting the scrubby jungle, which blazed up fiercely for a moment, and then left us darker and colder than ever. All through the night the Sepoys kept firing their muskets, not in the direction of the enemy, but in the air, because it warmed the musket barrel, which they could then clasp with their cold hands; and so passed the night—the enemy at intervals firing towards us, one of their guns giving so much annoyance that her Majesty's 80th and the Bengal Fusiliers charged and took it, the cheering of these two regiments quite arousing us in the comparative silence of midnight.

When the morning broke about half their camp was in our possession, and at sunrise a move was made, and the camp was cleared of them after a very slight resistance, and I was enabled to take a good view of our conquest. A large quantity of tents, a cluster of hackeries and stores in rear of the centre, with dead men, camels, horses, and bullocks, thickly strewn the camp; along the front, for at least a mile, were guns of all calibres, from a twelve-pounder upwards, some so large that the wheels had to be sunk in the ground to bring the muzzle to the required height. These were all backed by limbers, ammunition waggons, and tumbrils of all sorts and shapes; here also were three pauls, or small tents, apparently set on fire by rockets, while the wounded men within had been literally roasted alive.

On going to the front, where our own men lay, I find Oldham, of the Horse Artillery. He has been struck down by a bullet, and lies as calm as though he were asleep. And here is another horse artilleryman—poor Fitzgerald. It has been a hand-to-hand encounter, you can see by his fierce look and fixed teeth, not to say anything of the gash on his brow. Here is a cavalry officer close by, with just the same expression of countenance. Both these men might perhaps have been saved if they had depended less on the edge and more on the point of the sword; for my opinion is that men should always go into action with their swords at the engage, from which they should make guards and points.

Walking down the front of the camp, I could see men of all regiments, but very few black faces lay near the front. Although the army is composed of four times as many natives as whites, yet I see four white faces for one black. And now I come to where the 62nd made their charge; and here between and beneath the guns, British and Sikhs lay pell-mell, showing how sharp was the fighting at this spot. At some little distance, in front of three guns, lay groups of the 62nd in sixes and sevens, nearly all on their faces, and all with their heads to the foe, as if they were shot down while charging up to the guns. In front of one gun lay two groups like this. It was a bronze eighteen-pounder, with a man's face cast on the muzzle mouldings. It was overthrown now, and the nose grovelling in the dust; but that was but poor recompense for the brave men that lay dead in front of it.

I do not go so far along the front as where our rocket battery was last evening, as the bullets begin to whistle around me, reminding me that the enemy are yet in force on the right of their camp, our army, to which I now return, occupying the left of it. I take another look at the row of cannon, a mile in length, and I fancy that if any strategy had been shown, and the camp taken in flank instead of in front, it would have been done at less than half the sacrifice of life—the wheels of some of the largest guns being sunk into the ground, as I before said; and these would have been quite useless against a flank attack, and the left flank is guarded by seven guns only.

I do not know at what o'clock I got a breakfast from the quartermaster-sergeant of the 62nd. I had before this found a bombardier of my own troop, who had been lying all night on the field with the fleshy part of his thigh torn away. I soon found a dooley for him, and sent him in, and thought I was at least doing more good than if I had gone home with the rockets. I found my breakfast, a loaf and dram, very acceptable, as the first food I had taken for twenty-four hours; and then made towards a well outside the village of Ferozeshah, which was situated in the left centre of the camp, and gave the name to the battle. With some difficulty I got some water here, drinking out of my hands; the water poured from a Sepoy's lootah. Many of the enemy's dead had, it was said, been thrown into this well—but I was too thirsty to inquire; and

then went into the village. Here were several horses stabled, their riders being perhaps killed, or having to retreat on foot; and here I saw Captain Egerton, Quartermaster-General to the Ferozepore division. He was lying on a cot attended by an apothecary, Mathews; his horse was close by, with his master's crimson silk scarf tied round his neck, and his head drooping over the cot: he seemed mourning for his master, but was most likely tired and hungry. Captain Egerton's gloves were stained with blood, but I could not see any wound. And now a Sepoy regiment come into the place, in no very orderly manner, and are regulated and posted by their officers, and then receive another order to move off; and Mathews appeals to the officers, and four of the Sepoys take the cot and carry it some little distance, and then set it down and refuse to carry it farther.

I look round for some white face. "Let us take it ourselves," said I; but Mathews tells me he is scarce able to carry himself. And so we lift Captain Egerton on to the horse, and I find that his backbone is cut through—at least, from the appearance of his blue frock coat, such is the case; and I lead the animal gently through the narrow street opening out from the village. And then another order is received, and the regiment turns back; and on returning to the cot from which we had taken the wounded man, we lift him off the horse; but he has now ceased moaning, and is dead. The village has only one house of any importance, with a mud parapet of some three feet in height round the roof; and on this the commanding officer of the Sepoys took his post, giving me at my request a spare musket and ammunition. We had been having it all our own way all the morning, and our commander had been satisfied with the possession of the enemy's camp—this negative victory being almost forced upon him in consequence of the severe work of the day before, and nearly all the artillery ammunition being expended.

But now a very serious change had taken place not favourable to us. The enemy had been reinforced by Tej Singh with 30,000 men, and I think but few have seen what I and the native infantry officers saw from that housetop—not of great height, but sufficiently elevated to give us a fine view on a plain so level as Ferozeshah. Close by on our right was our force, too near to be seen to any advantage; but in front, at a mile

distant, was the whole of the newly arrived Sikh army advancing in battle array, with tom-toms beating, and that indescribable noise always accompanying the movements of large bodies of men. Banners were flying, and spears glistening from right to left, but were more dense in the centre; directly in front of which, on an immense elephant, sat their commander; but, fortunately for us, the elephant, by his sidling and undecisive movements, showed that Tej Singh had not quite made up his mind now that he was in our front. No doubt our opponents of yesterday had, in excuse for the loss of their camp and guns, rather exaggerated the prowess of their antagonists; and the new-comers were, fortunately for us, unwilling to risk the loss of the seventy guns still in their possession. A charge of cavalry quickened their decision. The 3rd Dragoons—the only European cavalry with our army—reduced by the battles of Moodkee and Ferozeshah to one-half their strength, together with the 4th Lancers, charged full at their centre; and when nearing their front, turned and threatened the left face of their line, cheering loudly—a cheer responded to by all the Europeans in the camp. And before the dust had cleared away, the enemy had retired disgracefully, veiling their retreat behind a much larger cloud of dust of their own making; and I was as well satisfied, and had as good a view, as though it had been a panorama got up for my special amusement.

I now rejoined the 62nd, and saw some of them with their bayonets and grass-cutter knives digging a shallow grave in the shallower ditch surrounding the camp; and presently the Commander-in-Chief and some of his staff came up, following a dooley. Lord Gough's appearance was not improved by the hurrying time he had had of it these last few days; but though I can remember this now, I was then all respect and reverence for that fine old officer, who, with his white hair and aquiline nose, looked every inch a soldier. He made inquiries for a prayer book; and after waiting some time, he threw back the curtains of the dooley and took a look at another hero, Sir Robert Sale, of Jellalabhad renown, who was lying there with a countenance that told of death without pain.

Sir Robert had been wounded at Moodkee, and had died on the advance to Ferozeshah. One of the staff lifted the blanket

that covered him, disclosing the wound in the inner part of the left thigh. No prayer book was to be procured, and he was buried without any burial service; but he was afterwards exhumed and reburied in the burial ground at Ferozeshah, amongst others of note.

On the night of the 22nd of December I slept on the battle field, wrapped up in one of the enemy's tents, struck by me and others for that purpose; and the next day, the fighting being all over, and the enemy reported as having recrossed the river, I took advantage of a spare gun-battery horse, and rode home to cantonments, my arrival causing quite a sensation. The armourer-sergeant of the 62nd, who had been taken in wounded in the leg, had reported me as having been cut in halves by a cannon shot at his side, and my prolonged absence had given strength to this circumstantial falsehood; and it was only by taking my share of a dozen of very bad brandy, in company with my chums and a slightly-wounded troop sergeant-major, Clarke, of the 3rd Dragoons, that I could convince them that I was still alive.

ANGUISH IN PRINT.

IN THE STRICTEST CONFIDENCE.

TEAR THE TWENTY-SIXTH.

CONSOLATIONS.

"I CAN'T think how mammas can be so silly as to believe all that is said by these lady principals," said Clara. "And so there's another new girl coming, just my age? I wonder how she will like Cedar mutton—all gristle and tiff-taff. I wish I was out of it all! And so it's all off between you and Monsieur Achille, is it, dear? Well, I am very glad, for it had got to be very tiring, really. Now, tell the truth, aint you glad yourself?"

"N-n-no, I don't think I am," I said. "It will be so dull now, with nothing to look forward to; and—heigho!—who would have thought that he would be so false?"

"Anybody, everybody," said Clara; "and yet you were highly offended because I said French gentlemen were fickle and brittle. Never mind, dear, there will be some one else some day, and I shall be bridesmaid, after all."

"Don't talk such stuff," I said, dolefully; while from the far distant past there seemed

to rise up the reproachful countenance of Mr. St. Purre, as I had seen him last, and I could not help sighing; while if any one had asked me whether I was sighing about Monsieur de Cochonet or Mr. St. Purre, I really don't think that I could have told them.

Time slipped on—I can hardly tell you how, but it really did pass. I had been home for the Christmas vacation, and tried hard to keep from going back to the Cedars, but in vain. Mamma declared that it was all for my good, and was what she called inflexible. So, after a regular round of gaiety, I was back at the hateful place once more, with the old routine wheel going round, and round, and round, and seeming to grind all the skin off my temper, so that I grew cross, and fretful, and peevish. Forming our minds, indeed! they did form our minds there, and a very bad shape they made them into. I know I was one of the most amiable of girls when I went down there; while at home now I am melancholy, and irritable, and—and—well, I don't know what.

Time went on—cold winterly days, when we could hardly smell the fire; and as to warming ourselves, we had better have been guilty of high treason. Mrs. Blunt was better, and loved a good fire, getting quite close to it; but Miss Furness had a theory that too much warmth was unwholesome, and that after coals had been put on, a fire ought never to be poked; while I declare if that tiresome old thing used not to lock up the fire-irons in the book cupboard when she left the room, so that we should not touch the fire; and there we used to be, poking it with pieces of slate pencil till they broke, or burning the end of the big ruler by hammering the burning coals with that.

Wet days, when there was no walking. North-easterly windy days, when Miss Furness's nose turned more red then ever, and her eyes watered with the bleak breezes that she would face. Health was everything, she used to say, and perhaps she was right; but I know I would rather be poorly and comfortable than healthy and always in misery and pain.

Dull, dreary days, with lessons from this one and lessons from that one. Italian I made some progress with, and music I always did love; but as for French, of late that had been sadly neglected. I really blushed at times to take up my exercises to

Monsieur de Cochonet; but he never uttered a word of praise or blame, but always sighed softly as he looked over them, while I was stern and obdurate as fate itself. No, I could not forgive him; and note after note that he would have had me take I pretended not to see, while as to those which he sent by Clara, I returned them unopened. No, I could not forgive him; for he had wounded me deeply, and in my tenderest sensibilities, and I showed him always that I was entirely changed. I was sorry for him, for he looked very unhappy. Yes, I pitied him, and pitied his weakness that had tempted him to forsake me for Miss Furness. I could have suffered anything else at his hands—neglect, scorn, contempt; but to forsake me for her—oh, it was too bad! But I was resigned: might they be happy!

Yes, I said so; and then I smiled in bitter mockery, as I looked upon Miss Furness's vinegary aspect, thought of her early morning walks, and cold, uncomfortable ways, and asked myself what there was in her to make a man happy, when, like a flash, the answer came—*money!* For I recollected the hints I had heard dropped of Mrs. Blunt being sometimes in pecuniary difficulties, and borrowing of Miss Furness, who had been very saving, and had had one or two legacies left her; so that really, and truly, the establishment was more hers than Mrs. Blunt's; and if she had liked she could have laid claim to the concern, but perhaps was waiting her time. Yes, that must be the secret; and Achille must know it. Why, of course she had told him, and they had made their plans together. I had quite given him up; but somehow the idea of those two planning and plotting for their future angered me terribly, and whenever I had such thoughts I used to be obliged to shed a few bitter tears; while I grew quite to sympathize with Mrs. Blunt, and could see plainly enough now why Miss Furness was allowed to assume so much, and to sleep on the first floor, besides being taken into consultation upon every important occasion, when the other teachers were nowhere, or only admitted upon sufferance.

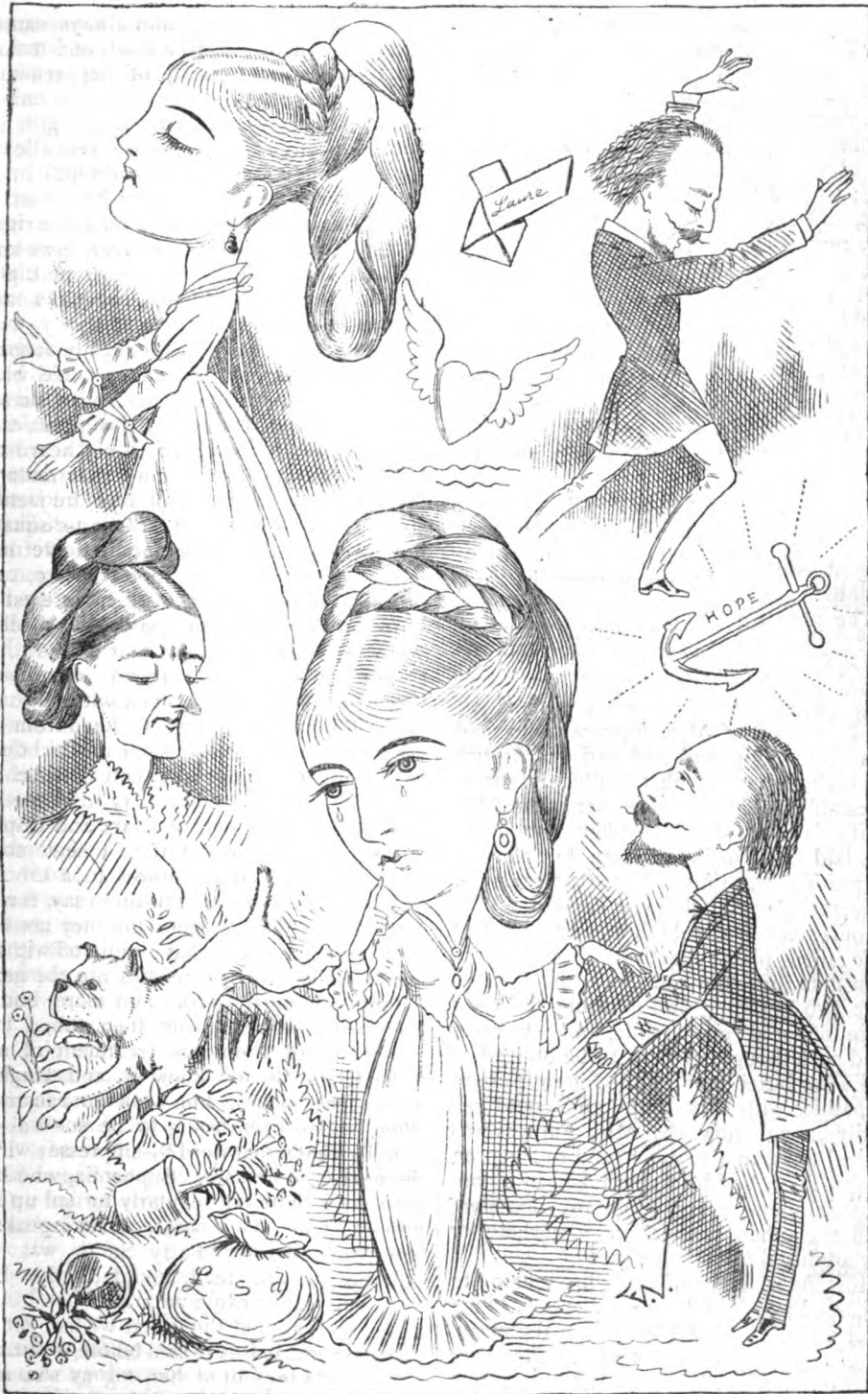
How the romance of one's life seemed to be passed away, while one was really living under a cloud!—and I knew now the meaning of the expression. And yet there was something resigned in my feelings, and I did not mind it so very much; for I was waiting for the end of my sojourn here. I

had learned the truth of there being something pleasant in melancholy, and I was always repeating the words of the old song—

“Go! You may call it madness, folly,
You shall not chase my grief away;
There's such a charm in Melancholy,
I would not, if I could, be gay.”

I'm not sure whether that is quite right, but it is as I recollect from very, very long ages ago; and it was about this time that I began to feel—oh, so very, very old, and worn, and weary.

Achille tried hard to obtain my forgiveness; but I would not notice. He whispered to me more than once, over the lessons, that it was from motives of policy that he had so acted; but I would not hear him. And it was about this time that mamma used to send me word of how frequently Mr. St. Purre used to call at Chester-square, and how kindly he always inquired after me; and it really was very kind of him, and almost looked as if he took an interest in me. But then, what interest could he feel in the poor, weak school-girl that I was? So I only sighed when mamma wrote, and tried, by being good friends with the new pupil, Euphemia Brassey, to keep from being miserable about Monsieur de Cochonet; for I made a vow never to call him Achille any more. Then he must try to pique me by taking more notice of Clara and Euphemia; but he gained nothing by that movement, for I saw Miss Furness look crochet needles at him—which, I mean to say, is a far better simile than daggers, for they are old, exploded things that have gone off without noise; while crochet needles are things of the present, equally sharp, and more vicious, from being barbed. And then, too, I told Euphemia all about his treatment of me, while Clara already knew it, and laughed in his face, making him look so ashamed, when he had been trying to be so—so—well, what's that word?—*empressé*; whilst the next time he came, Euphemia, who had felt a little flattered, regularly turned up her nose at him. Of course, I am speaking metaphorically, for Patty Smith was the only big girl who really could do that literally, but then it came natural to her. And it was such a good thing that we had got rid of Patty; for, as I have said before, I think, I never could look upon her, big as she was, as anything but a child; while she acted as a regular check upon all our little chats.



No, Monsieur de Cochonet gained nothing by that movement, only the holding of himself up to the scorn of the three eldest girls in the establishment; and after that it was that he took to sighing softly, and assuming the martyr, for he attacked the citadel of my poor heart in every conceivable way; while I fortified it with thoughts of the past, and regularly set him at defiance, my only regret—I think, I will not be sure upon that point—my only regret being that the poor exiles of whom he had written to me would suffer from this estrangement, for I knew that he could not do a great deal for them; and when I wondered whether Miss Furness would be generous, and help them out of her store, my heart whispered No, and I felt pained and sorry, and enclosed two sovereigns, all I had saved up, in a piece of paper, with the words—"For the poor exiles," written inside, and gave it to him in that dear old, dog's-eared, thumbled Nugent—dear to me for a thousand recollections!

The next time he came he was radiant with hope, but the arrows of his dark eyes glanced from the cold mail of pride with which I was armed now. I was as ice itself, while he seemed perfectly astounded. But he was mistaken; and the money sent was not in token of reconciliation, but so that others who were deserving should not suffer for our estrangement; and I can assure you that I felt very proud of my ability to crush down the love that, I am afraid, still burned in my breast.

In other respects matters went on very quietly at the Cedars; from being so fierce and snappish, Miss Furness was now quiet, and amiable, and smiling; and though I hated her most horribly, I tried to crush all my dislike down, and make the best of things. I found, too, now, that I was invited occasionally to take tea in the drawing-room, when Mrs. Blunt had a few particular friends; and, altogether, they seemed to treat me differently to the way from which I suffered when I first came. Then, too, Euphemia Brassey being in our room made it a little better; but, for all that, I was dull, and wretched, and miserable. You know, it was so tiresome in the old days with Patty; we did not want to be always drinking Spanish liquorice water, and eating sour apples, and cakes, and gooseberries in bed—it was so childish. It was all very well sometimes; but then Patty was so tiresome, thinking of

nothing else but eating, and always wanting to have what she called a feast, and making the room smell horribly of peppermint—which, in its way, is really as bad as onions. But Effie Brassey really was a nice girl, and sensible; and, of course, as we were allowed no suppers, it was nice to have a little in our bed-rooms; and we had one box that we used to call the larder, and take it in turns to keep it replenished. Sometimes we used to have sausage rolls, sometimes pork pies, and little tartlets that there was an old woman in the town used to make so nicely, while our greatest difficulty used to be about something to drink; for though we could bring home a paper bag in one hand and a parasol in the other, of course we could not carry a bottle, and you may be sure that we did not care for Spanish liquorice water, nor yet for lemonade. I should have liked bottled stout, though I did take almost a dislike to it after Patty Smith proposed to give me a Seidlitz powder, for the effervescence put me in mind of it. But, as a rule, we used to have wine—sherry or claret—in a dear, nice, champagney-looking bottle, with a silvery top, and a blue heraldic dragon sitting in a castle, with his head out of the top and his tail sticking out of the bottom—a scaly-looking dragon, like Richard Cœur de Lion's legs in the old pictures; while the tail was all barbed like a crochet needle tied back to back to another crochet needle. And, oh, it was such fun! I believe those were the only merry times we had. The new servant used to get the wine for us from a man in the town, and we used to lend her the key to put the bottle in the larder when she went up to make the beds; and I'm afraid to tell you how many bottles we drank, for it would be so shocking.

Effie Brassey was such a nice girl, and could enter into matters so much better than Patty Smith, and it was a pleasure to sit in the dusk of a night and tell her all about our disappointments—for, of course, they were disappointments, the poor Signor being found out, and Achille proving so utterly lost to all proper feeling, and acting as he did with Miss Furness.

TEAR THE TWENTY-SEVENTH. FORGIVEN.

THEY say that it is natural for women to be weak, and of course they who said so must know best about it. So if woman is naturally weak, I do not think I need be

very much ashamed of owning that I was the same as the rest of my sex, and willing at last to forgive poor Achille; for really he did look so pale and distressed at last, so worn, and sallow, and miserable, and seemed so to humble himself before me, that I began to be afraid he was contemplating something dreadful. He seemed so dejected, and bent, and old, and directed at me such penitent looks, that no one with a heart beating within her breast could have resisted for long; and by degrees his sorrow seemed to melt away the cold, icy armour in which I was encased, to sap the walls of the citadel of stone I had built round my heart, and one day—I could not help it—I could not resist the piteous look he directed at me, but forgave him with one quick, sharp glance, which brought almost a sob from his breast; while, though his eyes were cast down, I could see him swelling almost, as it were, with emotion, and I escaped from the room as soon as I possibly could, to try and calm the wild, fluttering sensation that pervaded my being.

Then Clara laughed at me, and sneered, and flouted, and jeered; but I did not care, for something seemed always telling me that I loved him very dearly. But I made up my mind to refrain from all meetings, and to do nothing clandestine, except the correspondence with a few notes; though I knew that it was nonsense to think for a moment that papa or mamma would ever give their consent to my loving and being espoused to a French master.

And then began the notes again; while now that I think of it all, it seems perfectly wonderful that we were not found out, over and over and over again, for Achille grew so terribly barefaced—I mean in his ways, for of course he did not remove his beautiful beard. Sometimes it was Clara who had a note for me, sometimes Euphemia; and then I did not like it, for it did not seem nice for them to be the bearers of the notes; and if such a thing had been possible, I declare that at such times I could have felt jealous; for I could not help thinking it possible that he had squeezed their hands when he had delivered the notes; and, as a matter of course, such a thing was too dreadful to contemplate for more than about half a minute at a time.

You may be sure I never asked them if such had been the case; but I know that I used to be snappish, and not like to say

“thank you” for the missives, however welcome they might be. But they never knew the reason, only thought that perhaps something had put me a little out of the way.

And what notes those used to be!—all bewailing his inability to meet me; for it was quite out of the question to make any appointments, with that horrible dog ranging and roaming about like a fierce wolf, night after night; nearly driving the poor old gardener mad, too, with the mischief he did.

“I declare, miss,” the old man said to me, “I’d sooner set up and watch in the garden myself night after night, than hev that there blessed beast a-destroying of everything. Certainly, there aint such a deal jest now; but what it will be when we comes to verbenas and bedding plants saints knows. Ribbon gardening, indeed!—the whole blessed garden’s torn to ribbons already. If some one would only poison him!”

“If some one would only poison him!” I mentally said, after him.

But no one did, and we had to content ourselves with notes. And such notes!—not what they were of old—full of patriotism; but all the same, pressing me to fly with him, to be his, to leave this land of cold and fogs for his own sunny south, where all would be smiles, and beauty, and love, and blue skies, and emerald verdure, and sunshine. Oh, what a future he painted! It was quite enough to destroy one’s sleep for the night, for one could do nothing but lie in the wild waking dream of an excited imagination. And then, after such waking hours, there was a violent headache in the morning. What could I do, being so weak, and leaning so towards him as I did? I knew how wicked it was, and how grievous; but then, it all seemed like fate—like something that was to be; and I used to think that all would come right in the end, when mamma and papa would forgive me, and we should all be happy together.

“He knows that you will have a nice little sum of money when you come of age,” said Clara, spitefully.

“That I’m sure he don’t,” I said. “How can you talk such nonsense? Why, he don’t know anything about our position at home.”

“Why, how can you say so?” replied Clara, “when you told him in my hearing, one night down in the conservatory, months ago.”

And that was right, though I had not re-

called it at the time; but it was too bad of Clara to try and make out that Achille was prompted by mercenary motives, when he was the very soul of generosity, and kept himself horribly poor by the amounts he gave away. And, besides, he was too much of a gentleman to care for money, except as regarded the good it would do to his fellow creatures.

But there, as it must have been seen all along, Clara always was petty, and spiteful, and full of little remarks of that sort, which she would throw at you, when they would come round, and hard, and prickly, just like one of those nasty, spikey chestnut shucks that will not bear to be handled. So I grew not to mind what she said; and when I told Achille, he used to laugh, and say that she was "*une drôle de fille*," and, like me, he took no further notice of it.

I would not consent for such a time—months, and months, and months; but I knew that at last I should be compelled to yield, and go with him. "But not yet," I said, "not yet," and I drove it off as long as I could; but at last I gave up, and promised to be his—the promise that should make me another's! And then began a week of such nervous excitement as was almost unbearable. Such foolish ideas, too, came into my head—some of them so childish that I was almost ashamed of them; such as wishing, like I had read of somewhere, to save up pieces of bread and butter, and to purchase a suit of boy's clothes. In short, it seemed as if nothing but absurdities would come into my head.

I should have gone on as comfortably again if I could have taken Clara and Euphemia into my confidence; but upon this most momentous of undertakings I felt, and Achille agreed with me, that I should confide in no one; for this was, indeed, too serious a matter to trust to another. In fact, at times I felt that I could hardly trust myself; for I used to be like the wife of King Midas, and I declare that the knowledge was such a burden that it would have been a relief to have put one's head down by the river, and whispered the secret. Every lesson day came a note; and there was the night settled, and everything arranged, before I could bring myself to believe that it was true; while all around me seemed strained, changed, and unnatural, and sometimes I really used to feel as if I were dreaming.

THE CASUAL OBSERVER.

AT THE LONDON HOSPITAL.

A MINUTE ago, and we were in that busy, noisy thoroughfare, Whitechapel-road, with its flaring gas and naphtha, and restless currents of people; now we are in a large and pleasant garden, rich in flowers, the special promenade of the hospital patients approaching convalescence.

A few steps, and we are in the corridors of the building. No grim, desolate, white-washed passages, chill, stony, and bare, as if specially designed for a ghost walk or funeral track; but quiet, substantial-looking places, warmed up, as a painter would say, by oaken floors and grained wainscoting.

We pass on, struck by the calm silence of the place, hardly a step being heard—even our guide walking gingerly as he doffs his hat—and, opening a door, we enter the first ward.

The ward is devoted to surgical cases, we are told, as opposed to the other great class into which hospital patients are divided—namely, medical.

A peculiar shrinking sensation assails those not strong of nerve as they step in, expecting writhing forms, faces distorted by agony, groans, and suppressed shrieks. This is Imagination's picture; the reality is a long, wide room, with a cool, pure atmosphere, and comfortable, homely-looking beds, with large checked hangings and grey coverlets. Scraps of oilcloth and carpet are by the bed-sides; books are upon the tables; and in a recess is a large Wardean case full of plants, the present of some ladies interested in the hospital.

There is nothing chilling or unpleasant to be seen, and the nurse who comes up to meet us is the perfect opposite of a Sairey Gamp or a Betsy Prig. Well spoken, and polished in manner, she tells us, in answer to questions, that her ward is quite full, and then points out specially interesting cases.

We pass then from bed to bed, to find the patients lying, almost without exception, in a calm state of wakeful repose. Some look pale and worn; some tolerably robust; but with all there is an air of cleanliness and comfort—a description applicable to all of the many wards of the building.

Over each patient hangs a card and a form—the form announcing in one case that the patient is to have "chops" and "wine,"

in another "full diet," again another "arrow-root;" while the former tells the date of entry, description of accident, and name of surgeon who has the case in his care.

So and So lies here with a sort of gipsy tent over his leg; and upon the coverlid being removed, we see poor So and So's leg is bound up, and suspended in a cradle, swinging and guarded so that even the bed-clothes shall not touch the injured limb, while—horribly suggestive—there is beneath a little pannikin to catch the blood; but the nurse says the leg has ceased to bleed. Poor So and So was wounded in battle—that is, in the battle of life. He was with his cart, which was overturned, and he received a compound fracture of the leg. However, he says he is getting on well, and not in much pain.

To every bed, as we pass on from ward to ward, we see that there is a rope suspended, with a cross handle, to enable the patient to help himself in some movement, when pillow or couch is uneasy, and he does not care to trouble a nurse.

This patient is up and dressed, and sitting by his bed with his arm in a sling; that one reading by a table; while yet another seems rejoicing in the pleasurable sense of being able to sit up once more in bed.

We have a little fellow of about ten in this couch, ready enough to answer, and tell us that he has fractured his thigh, but is getting better.

How did he do it?

"Fell out of a tree."

The nurse adds that he was birds'-nesting, and small patient gazes from face to face as much as to say—

"Don't scold me."

In another, a very small ward, we have a youth upon whose face seems set an awful mark. He is wasted to the last degree—pining away from spinal disease.

The nurse asks him how he is, and he seems to come back from a dreamy state to say he is not in much pain.

"A little better."

Would he like anything?

Yes, he would like something to drink.

Poor fellow! he looks as if he might soon partake of the waters of which those who drink shall never thirst.

Some cases are classed as on the dangerous list; and our guide asks of the state of this or that patient, with varying answers, one of the most striking replies being that

mute one conveyed by a tightening of the lips and a slight shake of the head.

On through ward after ward, each named after some generous donor to the hospital; and, truly, those names seem to shine with a greater lustre as seen about the heads of the sufferers whose pangs their generosity relieves; but in nearly every ward when the question is put to the head nurse—

"How many spare beds have you?"

The answer is—

"One," or "Two," or "Quite full."

Here we have a couple of wards bearing the names of Rothschild and Goldsmid. Hebrew wards these, with Hebrew nurses, and a kitchen expressly set apart.

And now a door is open, and our guide's remarks are unnecessary to tell us that we are in a medical ward, having passed from the region of surgery to that of the physician.

In spite of ventilation, and the abundant usage of Condy's fluid and other disinfectants, we have here a faint, sickly odour that is most oppressive, and a more sad and tired look in the faces that lie upon each white pillow. Weary restlessness is painted in the attitude into which each patient has tossed his limbs.

And now, after more quiet corridors and wards, a door is opened, and we stand listening; for there is a chorus of tiny voices repeating, after a pleasant-faced nurse, a little hymn of the "Gentle Jesus" type; and when it is ended we stand looking round the children's ward, with its many cots and beflowered windows. Gay pictures—the coloured chromos of the *Illustrated News*—are framed upon the walls; and "Little Red Riding Hood" smiles down upon the small sufferers lying around.

We are, in fact, in a great nursery—so homelike! Why, there is the very old, high, green wire fender against which, forty years ago, we used to rub our own nose, in the days followed by those nights when we lay and wondered what was the meaning of the holes in the japanned rushlight shade. There are little white garments airing on that fender. But enough, there are the patients to see.

This pretty little waxen-faced fellow, on being asked, says he is "tix;" but he is a terrible little liar, for his card says he is but three. Diseased hip-joint. Close by him, quite a baby sleeps placidly; he is aged one. Fell into scalding water. Another

here, too, has been fearfully burned; and again another has his poor little thigh fractured from a fall downstairs. But all look calm and free from pain. Toys lie on the coverlid—solid-looking cocks and extremely woolly sheep; and one little fellow has partly concealed under a picture-book a scrap of half-eaten bread and butter.

It seems natural, as we go out, to whisper "Good night! God bless you!" for already half the little things are asleep.

Female wards, surgical and medical. Any interesting cases? Yes; this is of lupus. Wolfish indeed! The horrible skin disease is devouring the poor sufferer's face. Another case—dangerous—attempted suicide—cut throat, been in some days; and another, brought in since, where the poor creature had effected her object too perfectly. Another case—choleraic diarrhoea; the patient very bad, but refuses to take her medicine.

On tiptoe through this ward, for—God help them!—there is a picture here—a dangerous case. A patient, evidently a wife, lies with her head turned upon the pillow, and a stout, broad-shouldered, grizzly-haired man sitting by the bedside holding her hand.

Wards—wards—wards—all full of suffering; but calm, patient suffering; with all that science can do to fight with disease and death most fully done. Large halls for the out-patients, medical and surgical; dispensaries full of drugs; and rooms with surgical appliances—splints, bandages, and rolls of spongio pileine, and lint; a theatre with seats, and a horrible-looking couch that whispers of bright blades for operations; but no straps or buckles visible—chloroform performs that duty. A kitchen with appliances for cooking largely—roasts, and broths, and beef tea by the cauldron; and then, with a sigh, Whitechapel once more, with its busy crowds, and a muttered word of thankfulness for that greatest of all boons—health.

And now one word to the generous. Do not, in straining your eyes to gaze on the troubles of Africa or Hindoo land, skip over the sufferings of those at home. Go and see for yourselves the pangs amongst the very poor alleviated in the London Hospital; and remember that, whereas it is situate where London is most dense, it is, though one of the largest, the poorest of our hospitals. They want funds, they want

room, beds—everything to increase the power of doing good. They accommodate many hundred patients within the walls; but, had they space, they would have a thousand sufferers. Their beds are generally, with a few exceptions, full; and should the dire enemy that so often comes once more strike down victims in his favourite East-end haunts, where hospital room is to be found this writer cannot say.

A HOLIDAY IN THE NORTH.

VIII.

THE following day was spent in a very desultory sort of way, as we dare not wander far from the tent, lest an eruption should take place in our absence, and there was nothing to be done while we stayed there. We strolled about with guns and rods till towards four o'clock, when we proceeded to cook our dinner in: the Old Strokk, and, for want of other occupation, devoted our energies to the production of a splendid repast, which included, among other things, a boiled duck shot that morning, which we hung by the neck into a boiling spring, with a stone tied to its feet to keep it from being knocked about in the seething water; the result was what one of the party happily denominated "sulphide of duck."

After dinner we again tried to kill time by teasing the Strokk, and many were the sods with which we stuffed it. But all to no purpose. It had had one eruption, and nothing would induce it to have another.

At last, in despair, I took my gun and wandered off across the river, vainly trying to get near the wily curlews, and so straying farther and farther from the tent and the Great Geyser. Presently, however, I began to think that I was getting too far off, and turned back again; but, alas! it was too late.

While I was still a long way off, on looking up, I beheld a gigantic spout of water rising from the Great Geyser. I ran and ran, in hopes of arriving before it was over; but still, as I ran, I watched the Geyser, and in consequence stumbled a good deal over the rough ground, and once fell full length, gun in hand, and got up with a feeling of sincere thankfulness that I had not shot myself. The Geyser still continued to spout gigantic columns of beautifully clear water—over seventy feet in height, as well as I could judge; but I was on the

wrong side of the river, and as I crossed it I dipped out of sight of the eruption, and on mounting the other bank, and running breathless to the tent, I arrived only in time to see my companions standing in the empty basin, and looking down into the tube. The eruption was over. We had little hopes of the Geyser showing any further signs of activity, and as we were obliged to set out homewards on the following morning, we all turned into the tent and lay down for a good night's rest, thankful for having seen what we had.

About two o'clock I was awakened by a good shaking, and heard some one say, "The Geyser's going again," and the next thing I remember is that I was outside the tent in my socks, running towards the Geyser as if for dear life. The others followed, laughing at my haste, and, getting to windward of the basin, we had a grand display of waterworks. The eruption did not last so long as on the previous day, but while it continued was very fine, shooting up the clear water, in a sheaf of nine feet diameter, to an enormous height. When it was over, and we wished to return to the tent, I found myself surrounded by streams of boiling water, which had overflowed from the basin. As it was a very cold night, I had put on my whole available stock of socks, in order to keep my feet warm; and, in my hurry to see the eruption, I had rushed out without waiting to remove my socks, or put on my boots. I was therefore in an awkward predicament, for if I attempted to get back to the tent, I should not only scald my feet, but be obliged to spend all the next day with wet socks, or else without any; and I felt no inclination to remain where I was until the waters subsided, as it was extremely cold. After laughing at me and chaffing me a little, however, one of my companions, who had cautiously got into his boots before leaving the tent, took pity on me, and carried me on his back out of danger of boiling. We then turned in again, and had a sound sleep of several hours, until nearly eight o'clock, when we were forced to get up by the guides (instigated by one of the party who could not sleep, and so had already turned out) pulling down the tent about our ears.

We cooked our last breakfast in the most accommodating kitchen range of Geysers, and then loaded the horses, and started off on the same route as that by which we had

arrived two days before. We followed our old track all the morning, again crossing the Bruarà, changing horses, and lunching at fly-infested Middalr, and so on, until we reached the green-floored amphitheatre which I have already mentioned. Here we rested for a short time in the blazing sun—the hottest we had yet had; and then struck off towards the south-west, across Lyngdals Heide, without any vestige of a path to guide our steps. The riding was pretty rough, and tried the weaker horses a good deal. The character of the country, too, was again changed, being a waste of a different looking lava to any we had yet seen, much overgrown with the white moss and short scrub.

Eight hours and a half after leaving the Geysers, we arrived at Kaldarhöfði (Cold River head), where the river Sog issues from the Lake of Thingvall, and, after a course of about three-quarters of a mile, opens out again into the smaller lake called Ulfljotsvatn. We first of all rode down to this lower lake, intending to pitch our tent on its shore, but the swarms of flies warned us that this was out of the question; so we went a little farther up the river, on to higher ground, where the winged pests were not so numerous, and, selecting a favourable camping ground, we unloaded the horses and turned them loose. The tent was soon pitched, and we managed to get up sufficient fire to boil our soup and tea, with which we washed down the Australian beef and biscuits.

After our meal we strolled off in different directions, some shooting and some fishing, not without result, while others contented themselves with admiring the scene. A steep green hill rose immediately behind the tent, and on the other side, some thirty yards off, was a high precipice, at the foot of which the river Sog dashed and foamed in its rapid course. On the other side of it was a similar precipice, and another green hill, round whose sides a huge brown eagle was sailing majestically to and fro, while flights of ducks passed continually up and down between the river's walls. About half a mile above the tent, the Lake of Thingvall gradually narrowed to a point, and issued in a series of rapids into the river, which again delivered its green waters into the lower lake, about the same distance below the tent. It was just at the mouth of this river that the big fish lay basking in

the sunlight; and splendid sport they gave us, some weighing five pounds, and taking some time to land. But I have since heard that even bigger ones are to be met with at the exit of the river from the lower lake. They were the same sort as those we had caught in the Lake of Thingvalla, but, of course, much larger.

We had pitched the tent about half a mile from a farmhouse, and took good care not to lose the opportunity of applying for some of the excellent coffee which the Icelanders can always produce. These Bærs are all pretty much alike—several grass-covered gables, parallel to one another, built of turf, on a lava foundation, and with most inexplicable interior communication. On entering the front (and only) door, we dived down a dark, low passage, with a floor of earth, and suddenly found ourselves in the kitchen of the establishment, which consisted of an irregular room, with a fire of brushwood in the middle, and a hole in the roof to do duty for a chimney. Turning to the right, down another dark passage, and trusting to Providence, we groped our way to a doorway on the right hand side of the passage, and entered the guest-room, luckily without broken heads. This was a narrowish room, with door at one end and window at the other, while down the sides were two rows of broad berths or shelves, covered with uninviting looking mattresses. Under the window—which would not open, and which I imagine, from the smell of the room, had never been broken since the Bær was put together—was a small table, and we sat on the shelves on either side of this, and drank our coffee with great satisfaction.

And now came our last ride over Icelandic ground; for our time was up, and we must hurry back to Reykjaik, if we meant to return to England in the *Diana*. An hour and a half was occupied in crossing the river, as the horses had to be unloaded, swim across in detachments (Thurdur holding their bridles from the stern of the ferry boat), and loaded again on the other side.

Taking a north-westerly direction, we skirted the western shore of Thingvalla; and after crossing a most remarkable white moss-grown, level valley, we began a very steep ascent, winding backwards and forwards on the mountain side, with the capes and islands of blue Thingvalla far below us, until at length we reached the summit of the pass. We now got almost lost among

the numberless peaks and valleys of the mountain top, which looked as though it was a volcano fallen from the moon; but after windfng in and out, and backwards and forwards, for a considerable time, and passing over places which would have made one very careful, even on foot, descended rapidly, and came out, through a sort of natural gateway overhung with lava blocks, on to an undulating, unchanging desert, which stretched far away to the sea. After about five hours' riding, we halted for lunch, and completely demolished a 4lb. tin of Australian beef, without anything to wash it down but a little raw brandy, for we had seen no water since leaving the Lake of Thingvalla. In about another hour, however, the horses scented a little round pool of bad water, and a regular scramble ensued for places round the edge. It was a most comical sight to see them all, with their heads together in a sort of star, drinking as hard as they could drink. Not long after this we fell into the Hekla road, and a bright blue line of sea on the horizon showed us the point where our journey was to end.

We pressed on rapidly, and after crossing the Laxå, raced as hard as we could go the rest of the way, and only drew rein at Geir Zoegas' door, in Reykjaik. We slept that night in the ball-room at the hospital, the only place in which we could secure beds; and the next evening found us assembled on the deck of the little *Diana*, gazing with regret at the southern shores of Iceland. I bade farewell to the beautiful, barren island, with a sincere wish and a lurking hope that it might be only au revoir.

IN CAMP AT ALDERSHOT.

"IT'S a devil of a place, sor!" And if vastness, wildness, and a general aspect of desolation merit the term, truly it is a "devil of a place."

Our companion—not a Highlander—stood by us on Gun-hill, from whence you gaze down into a hill-encircled basin—a basin whose contents, should these sham movements turn to the real, would be blood.

Aldershot would be one of the most beautiful places in the world, but nature never finished it, and when man took it in hand he made—with his brick barrack and wooden hut, of sand and sterile soil, heath and furze—bad ten times worse.

There is something attractive, though, in the scene: a patch of snowy bell tents here, another there amidst the sombre firs, with now and then a fluttering flag, a large marquee, or the glint of steel as a sentry walks up and down before his neatly built sod sentry-box; and upon descending for a walk through the camp, interest is increased by the kaleidoscopic effects of colour, bright as well as dun—beautiful as well as grotesque.

A smart Lancer orderly prances by on a sleek horse, as from a dingy hut a slatternly soldier's wife runs shrieking out after "Billy!" who seems to think his proper place in society is beneath the horse's heels.

A few steps farther on an open door reveals woman again—poor woman, she is not at her best here!—washing; and washing-day, from the fluttering garments, seems every day of the week.

Again a few steps, and the ears are dinned with discords from a couple of huts, where as many bands are practising at least ten tunes, each man playing what seemeth him good in his own ears.

We have not far to go to get to the tented part of this mingling of military chaos and order. In this clump of tents we have the dark-coated Rifles, drilling, cleaning accoutrements, playing cricket or quoits, or lolling upon the heather and sand. Next a regiment of Guards, drilling to tattoo of drum and call of bugle—some in forage caps, with the large black bearskins sown, so to speak, amongst the heathery and gorse bushes, where they stand up like rampant cats bent on nocturnal orgies. In the next clump a gay regiment of Hussars—the 10th; beyond, the Bays, scarlet-coated Dragoons; and, again, a little farther, the Life Guards, with beyond them the Blues and the scene of the well-known stampede.

We have come miles, and we may still go miles and miles again before we shall have passed the many lines of tents. We pass, then, to the right, and reach the tents of the Militia contingent of the First Division, and here all is busy preparation, for rumour—the falsest of false prophets here—says that in a few hours the orders will come to march.

Whither? No one knows.

How many are going? No one knows—that is, for certain, for the orders are held back; but one body is said to be destined for Chobham, another for Woolmer.

At all events, preparations are going on: men are drawn up, and the medical officer

is weeding them—drawing up by the roots the sore of foot, the weak of chest, and those—some of many—touched by that summer disease whose seeds are in impure water, or fructified by long draughts when he who drinks is overheated by marching; lest diarrhoea should be rife amongst some of the regiments, and the hospital tents become a real necessity.

The sides of this tent are drawn up, and we see the straw and kits of the men in the little circle where, with heads to the circumference, the soldiers lie thirteen strong—a number to be increased to sixteen as soon as they start upon their flying campaign.

The next tent is an officer's; and here a couple of captains are testing the new waterproof sheet which is to form bed and valise for the flight. Forty pounds weight of luggage is the amount allowed to each officer—a small allowance enough, when it includes bed and baggage, clothes, &c., save such as he carries upon his back.

Practice makes perfect, and, after a few trials, the simple necessities are packed and rolled and strapped into a sort of huge black pudding or puffy bolster, upon which appears in white letters the officer's name and regiment.

As to what is about to take place, the most vague rumours are afloat; and many of the officers join in condemning the reports already made public, as having been shots let fly from a bow drawn at a venture. That the orders should be kept back is easily comprehensible, when it is taken into consideration that much of the success of future strategy depends upon the generals in command being called upon to exercise their own ingenuity in selecting and putting in practice the most clever openings in the game of military chess.

To-day has been but a blank day—an interregnum devoted to drill and preparation; but from the various eminences, as far as the eye could reach, there were visible roaming bodies; the white and green of the Highlanders, the dingy scarlet of the militia—who, for the most part, have brought down London stamped in their fallow faces—while in the far distance, shimmering in the bright sun like a ripple of silver upon a sandy beach, extended, faded, returned, and shimmered again, the steel helmets and cuirasses of the Life Guards.

The mingling of the useful and the useless meets the eye at every turn. Smartly

polished buckles and pipeclay certainly add to the appearance of a corps; but surely they are unnecessary in connection with a manure cart, and only tend to give the men fretting and useless work.

The cart rattles by all the same with one of the Military Train riding postillion, and is followed by an ambulance waggon, bound on a medical not a surgical errand.

And now away on the left arises, after the braying of a bugle, a loud, detonating noise, which strikes the ear as if all the carpets in Belgravia had been brought out to be beaten; and the idea is strengthened by the thin cloud of dusty-looking smoke that floats away. It is, however, only a militia regiment firing in square at imaginary cavalry, with the Snider rifle, one of which implements seems even yet like a novel toy to the boyish-looking sentry close at hand; for, under the impression that nobody is looking, he opens and shuts the breech-piece and snaps the cock, till an orderly dragoon canters by, when the sentry resumes the stiff attitude, and commences once more his monotonous tramp.

TABLE TALK.

IF you will not admit women to Parliamentary honours, always get them on your side if you wish to bear the letters M.P. at the end of your own name. Mr. Albert Grant seems to have been wise in his generation in this way, for one of the last things on the carpet of Kidderminster is that, according to the evidence, 8,000 yards of ribbon were ordered for the good ladies of the town—whether bonnet or cap ribbon is not stated. Perhaps it was to harness the ladies to his triumphal car.

LORD DUNSANY intends to call the attention of the House of Lords to the frequent instances of unintended and unnecessary torture inflicted on criminals in the execution of capital sentences through the clumsiness or inexperience of volunteer executioners; and to move, that in the opinion of this House the present system of executing criminals is attended with unequal and needless torture, and often leads to revolting and discreditable scenes; that until any preferable method shall be adopted it is expedient to have recourse to the Spanish garotte as being immediate in its result and always uniform in its operation. Better

move for the abolition of capital punishment, as a relic of barbarism, and entirely opposed to modern ideas of that which is decent and in order.

A MEETING of working men has been held in Liverpool to adopt a petition to Parliament for the suppression of Ritualism. It would be a curious fact to ascertain how many of the above petitioners ever go inside a church. As Barney O'Reardon might have said, "Up northwards nine-tenths of the working men never go to church at all; and when they do, they go to chapel."

MR. H. M. STANLEY has addressed a letter to a gentleman at Nottingham, in answer to the question whether he is of the same opinion as the late Dr. Livingstone respecting the use of spirituous liquors by travellers. Mr. Stanley replies to the effect that a man who needs the support of such liquors is unfit to travel in Africa, and that a drunkard cannot stand a tropical climate. The gentleman at Nottingham had better get and read Mr. David Ker's work, "On the Road to Khiva," in which he will learn that the beverage par excellence when travelling through the burning deserts is cold tea, flavoured with a slice of lemon, if possible in a place where lemons are half-a-crown apiece. After every burning journey, where the scorching has been frightful, the traveller, on his way through the Steppes, calls for a samovar, or urn of tea.

A DISCUSSION went on some little time ago about the contents of a gill measure. In Lincolnshire it contains not a quartern, but invariably half a pint, and the liquor is drunk out of a "moog." Manchester workmen never ask for pints or pots of beer, it is always served to them in glasses. If two or three enter a house, they call for as many "beers" as there are individuals. Very few of the taverns keep "fourpenny" at all. The workmen drink sixpenny ale, or else port wine, which is retailed at twopence per glass.

Communications to the Editor should be addressed to the Office, 19, Tavistock-street, Covent-garden, W.C. Contributions should be legibly written, and only on one side of each leaf.

Terms of Subscription to ONCE A WEEK, free by post:—Weekly Numbers for Six Months, 5s. 5d.; Monthly Parts, 5s. 8d.

ONCE A WEEK

NEW SERIES.

No. 344.

August 1, 1874.

Price 2d.

JACK'S SISTER; OR, WOMANLY PAST QUESTION.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

THE HOUR OF RETRIBUTION.



LEFT

Merle

at Miss Dynevor's, trying to coax an invitation from that fascinating young lady to a picnic at Cliefden.

"For, though you haven't asked me," he whispered saucily, during a running fire of conversation among the guests, "you are going to let me come, Lottie, are you not?"

She turned her dazzling eyes, full of tantalizing provocation, upon him.

"Did you want to be asked? But, no; you can't be. I've said no parson, or would-be parson, shall be at fête of mine. I can't bear the breed; and I never break my word."

"Bravo, Miss Dynevor!" cried Sir Carlton's coarse voice. "Stick to your colours like a brick. We want no sermons to sweeten the shades of Formosa."

"But Kinnardson isn't a clergyman," put in Cloughton, half angrily; "so I don't see why he should preach, any more than you or I."

"He's going to be one, so it's all the same—brings him under the act, you see," laughed the baronet.

"No, he isn't," Cloughton answered, boldly, in his desire to put down a man he

disliked. "That idea's exploded long ago. My governor's going to look out something better than that for him."

"Is that true?" said Minnie, turning to Merle. "Say yes, and you may come."

"Thanks," he answered sullenly; "but I don't care to come if Drugh does. What do you have him for?"

"I can't help it," and she spoke in an undertone. "He bullied me so that I said that if my number were not full by to-night he might come; and it still wants one."

"One besides me?"

"Oh, no; but if you are going to be a parson, after all—and I'm sure you're not fit for one, sir—I won't have you. I never go back from my word. Now, do speak out for once. Are you, or are you not?"

"Now, then, Miss Dynevor, don't let young Kinnardson talk you over," bawled Sir Carlton; "fair play's a jewel."

Merle looked at him wrathfully. To oust that loud-voiced baronet was worth more than any profession at that moment.

"I am not," he said, turning to Minnie. "Didn't Cloughton say so? 'Nous avons changé tout cela.'"

"On your honour?"

"On my honour. Now, Lottie, is it to be Sir Carlton or me?"

"You," said Miss Dynevor, very sweetly.

And in his triumph at seeing the livid scowl which overspread the baronet's ugly face, Merle forgot that he had renounced the sacred profession for which he had been educated, and on which his marriage was pending—renounced it, not from theological scruples, though he fancied he had sundry; not from a sense of his own unfitness, though God knows he felt it only too well; but to find favour in the eyes of a fashionable actress, and mortify an unmitigated roué.

That evening, Cloughton, who was dining at the club, gave a very amusing sketch of the afternoon dispute to his guest, one Mr. Thomas Middlemist, winding up with—

"Kinnardson's perfectly 'gone' about that girl. It's a regular case of spoons. But I'm glad he's given up the pulpit—no matter why. He isn't the man for it."

"At Cliefden, eh?" said Middlemist. "Pretty part. My mother'th got a cottage near there. I dare thay you'll have thome fun. Mind and tell uth about it."

He made no comment on what Cloughton had said of Merle; but, as we have seen, it was not forgotten later on.

There *was* some fun at the picnic—rather riotous fun, and a good deal of it. And Merle was there; made a great deal of, too—to the unutterable misery of the faithful Mr. Paul, and the disgust of all the old stagers, excepting one, a certain white-whiskered, taciturn Frenchman, the Comte de Gesvrolles, well known as one of Miss Dynevor's principal patrons; and who, though never far absent from the young actress's shoulder, somehow accorded a more indulgent tolerance to Merle Kinnardson than he showed to most young men, or than that young man showed to him.

Do you want me to describe the picnic? Upon my word, I can't. I know that there was a row from Maidenhead to Cliefden, when Minnie's boat was steered by herself, Merle pulling bow with Oxford ease and "form;" a charming lunch, spread, by special permission, in the Cliefden woods, and where everything most costly and most out of season was to be had, washed down by copious champagne; that there were songs sung by world-known singers, and more champagne; flirtations flirted, and more champagne; tea boiled in a gipsy kettle over an amateur fire, and more champagne; a row back by moonlight, with champagne accompaniment; and then the train to London, with much spooning from the younger members, and much wild mirth from the rest; all culminating in the maddest and merriest of petits soupers in the actress's own house at West Brompton.

A very successful entertainment, the guests said. Better than a Mohammedan paradise, Merle added. But, even in the full tide of pleasure and excitement, he felt that the days of prudence were over, and that from that hour he must swim with the stream to which he had committed himself. He did swim with it; and it carried him farther and farther, till the old landmarks seemed faded away and lost in the distance. Remorse remained; and to drown that he went deeper

and deeper still. Before the time of Middlemist's letter to his cousin, there was, probably, not to be found in London a young man more outwardly reckless and more inwardly miserable than Merle Kinnardson.

I do not mean to go into this part of his life. Infatuated by an insane folly, he had taken one false step; and now there was no drawing back. Let him wish it ever so much, he could never be a clergyman now; and therefore he did wish it—vainly. Let him save ever so closely, he could never wipe off the load of debt which one-third of his capital would hardly have covered; and would Jack let him marry Enid, when even the little their generosity had given him to show was squandered away? Marry *Enid*! Could he ever marry her now without telling her all? and could she overlook that all, or would her relations let her?

In his heart, he thought not. In his heart, he *knew* himself so unworthy, that the writing of those brief letters to his betrothed cost him almost as much pain as the reading them inflicted on her. Many of her answers were never read at all—put on one side for fear of reproaches which were not in them, and bitterness which was not in her to feel.

And yet he loved her!

It seems absurd to say so, when every day saw him more committed to the chains of La Belle Dynevor; when the expenses incurred in joining in all the amusements and extravagances of her set had obliged him to exchange his respectable lodgings for a couple of dingy rooms, in a wretched street near Westminster, the address of which he took care no one but himself should know; and when every day of his life was a tacit insult to the love and reverence which an honourable man takes delight in paying to the woman he is going to make his wife.

But still it is true. As Enid's image receded, it became more beautiful in his eyes. As his own actions dragged him day by day farther from his guardian angel, his heart yearned more vainly for her, and his ratio of her value increased; until he sometimes wondered if it were true that anything so fair, pure, and wise had ever been his to cast away; and loathed from his heart all but one of the gay and gaily-clad ladies who had swept her from his shrine.

All but one; for he could not loathe Minnie. She still held her sway over him—

sometimes kind, sometimes cruel; but ever drawing the reins tighter about his neck, and leading him by the bit of his own weakness as once, long ago, he had led her. And what did he propose to himself at the end of all this? Nothing bad, I do assure you. Indeed, if he ever thought of an end at all, it was something in this wise: that Minnie should grow to love him, love him so wildly, so passionately as to satisfy every craving of his heart; love him so that for his sake she should be willing to give up that house in Edith-grove where he had idled away so many pleasant hours, those mad and merry entertainments which he had enjoyed so much; all her piquant and professional acquaintances, male and female; even the stage, where her acting, by satisfying his æsthetic tastes to the core, riveted every link she wove about him; and so, having forsworn mankind and the world in general for his sake, might retire into private life (how to support herself therein did not appear: *that* had no connection with himself), and, loving him to the end, might be rewarded by his warmest and most protecting friendship—friendship too platonic for even Enid to object to. For in those Utopian days he also would be reformed, and married to his real, true love, who was too good to punish errors and extravagances which had resulted in saving a woman, young and fair as herself, from pernicious ways and evil companions.

Reader, I beg you will not laugh. In the first place, it is rude to interrupt a novelist; and in the next, please to remember that these virtuous and agreeable little arrangements for Self and Co. (a great deal for Self and very little for Co.) were not proclaimed on the housetop; but rather floated through a mind whose inborn canker of selfishness had been positively fostered by long years of love and self-sacrifice from Enid, and encouraged by the generous docility of Minnie's early affection. Of all men living, Merle had least cause to doubt in his divine right of riding roughshod over feminine hearts; and, poor boy! it seemed so natural and proper to him that women should sacrifice themselves to his comfort and pleasure, that it is really a pity he should ever have been roughly awakened.

It was to be, however.

At the close of the summer season, Miss Dynevor had not left town for the provinces, after the manner of a good many actresses, but had accepted a still better en-

gagement at another theatre, until the return of the manager, and the reopening of the Universe with a new play for the winter, should call her back to her old arena.

Somehow, this circumstance, without which Merle could never have got so entangled, was attributed by him to Minnie's growing affection for himself; and forthwith he began to presume, after his old fashion, upon the supposition.

"Why was that Drugh," he demanded, "still uncashiered, when in her absence he never failed to blacken her character to the utmost? It was repulsive even to have to meet such a man; and, in fact, if Minnie did not give the fellow his congé, he (Merle) should be obliged to take his own."

At this premature tyranny Minnie fired up, and there was a quarrel; after which Merle stayed away for a week, and was miserable accordingly. At the end of that time, however, he met her in the park, drifted to her side, and was greeted with the sweetest pouting reproach—

"To stay away and sulk, after he had made her drive Sir Carlton from the house! It was too bad; and, hateful as the exiled one was, she would be obliged to re-admit him if her obedience only left her utterly desolate."

Needless to say what answer this speech evoked. Merle put his head into the collar again that instant, and immediately after presumed more than ever. He had never felt so triumphant; when, in the midst of his exultation, lo! some evil tongue whispered in his ear that the real rival to be feared was not Sir Carlton, nor Mr. Paul, nor any of the Londoners, but that quiet, white-whiskered old Frenchman, who played so unobtrusive a part in all Miss Dynevor's social gatherings; that it was he, the Comte de Gesvrolles, whose love of the Thespian art had caused him to pay the rent of the West Brompton bower; that it was he who loaded those slender fingers with bright gemmed rings; and he who was to be—But here the evil whisper sank lower and became almost inaudible. Only let Mr. Kinnardson inquire for himself whether Miss Dynevor had not yesterday seceded, with heavy pecuniary loss, from her engagement at the Olympus, and M. de Gesvrolles paid the last of his farewell calls prior to leaving England for his patrimonial estates in Bretagne.

In a tempest of rage and incredulity, one

of his old ungovernable furies, Merle tore off to West Brompton, got admitted with some difficulty—as it was not one of Minnie's "at home" days—and poured out an almost incoherent torrent of threats, reproaches, entreaties, and tender adjurations, before the young woman, who, looking fairer than usual, draped in rich, gold-coloured silk, with costly lace at her throat, diamonds on her fingers, and a broad scarf of fairy-wove black lace falling from her waist and over one rounded arm, seemed as if prepared and armed for conquest. And Merle was conquered. He had never lost his head so completely; never flung prudence so entirely to the winds. Hitherto, his love-making, however devoted, had been light and playful in order; but to-day a sense of jealous injury joined to the inexpressible fascination of this little bookseller's daughter to sweep caution to the winds, and carry him completely out of himself. It was not for some time that Minnie interrupted him. She had listened till then with a yielding, seductive sweetness, which led him on and on.

"And suppose it were true," she said, at last, slowly, but still softly—"suppose that I were going to leave the stage and reside in France—well!"

For his fierce gesture almost frightened her; and she glanced nervously at the velvet portière dividing her small drawing-room from a still smaller snuggerly beyond.

"True, Minnie! you dare—you have the heart to say that, and to me!"

"Why not to you?"

"Why!"

Her cold tone almost choked him. Enid was beginning to be avenged.

"Yes," she said, sharply, in quite a new voice, and with a new manner. "Why not to you? You yourself have just proposed to me to leave the stage, and my friends and home, and go away—somewhere—at your bidding. If M. de Gesvrolles has done the same, he has probably suggested a fitting equivalent for the sacrifice. I don't say I have consented; but I ask you—*you*, Merle Kinnardson, if I consent to what you wish, what will you give me in return?"

He was cruelly hurt—hurt and shocked, honestly and virtuously, at the calm selfishness of such a question; and his voice showed what he was feeling, though in the

presence of that beautiful audacity it was forced, in some measure, to control itself.

"In return, Minnie? If you loved me, if you cared for me one-half as much as I do for you, you would never calculate over your returns. Why do you look so hard and cold, and turn away from me like that? Minnie, Minnie! be a little kinder. Be yourself—"

And then he flung himself, half kneeling, by her side, and tried to unlock her tight-clasped hands, while he poured out a fresh flood of passionate entreaties.

"Say you will do as I ask. Say it, darling," he implored, at the end. "Just one little word, and your reward shall be a lifetime of devotion and fidelity. Think how long I have cared for you; and never doubt my changing now. Minnie, you forgave me once. Experience taught you why I was forced to seem hard; but now—now my own—"

He broke off short, voice and passion drowned at once in a peal of irrepressible laughter which broke from the girl's lips, shrill and mocking as a little bell.

"Forgave you!" she repeated—"forgave you!"

And the blaze of scorn in those bright brown eyes struck him motionless and almost stunned beneath her withering gaze.

"And you really believed *that*! Listen to me, Merle Kinnardson, and let go my hands. I'd rather a worm touched them than you. Doubt you, indeed! No, I never doubted you—never doubted for one moment since that day in St. John's Gardens that you were a bad, mean, selfish coward. And you are! Yes, frown and clench your hands as much as you like. You could frighten me once, but not now—not now! Once I loved you—I would have given my life for you; and how did you reward me? First tricked me into that love, and then cast me off like a worthless rag. Was even that all? Good heavens, no! When you had made anger and bitterness between me and my father—my kind, gentle father, who had no other child but me; when you had made me a mark for cruel gossip, lost me my good name, and driven me from home to keep your wretched secret, you were not satisfied. When you heard I was dead, you were not touched. Silence! how dare you interrupt me! If you had had even common feeling for the innocent girl who loved you, you would have come forward and

cleared her name when you knew it was foully and falsely slandered for your sake—you would have gone, at any risk to your miserable self, and spoken the truth to that poor old man, when he was dying of shame and grief for his daughter's dishonoured death. Why, the lowest creatures that crawl the London streets would have had more honour than to play the sneaking, cowardly part that you did. And you think that after that—after coming back by night and on foot to see my father once again and beg his forgiveness; after toiling all that weary way, foot-sore, sick, and hungered, to find my end—oh, God! oh, God!—an empty house, a new-made grave—that I could forgive you? Why, I could have strangled you that first time I saw you under the gas lamp in the green-room yonder, and yet I controlled myself. Though I loathed the sight of you, I told myself that if you had shame and decency enough to let me alone, I'd let you alone; but you would not. You forced yourself upon me; and then I vowed I'd drag you lower than ever you dragged me. What! you grind your teeth? Grind away, Mr. Merle Kinnardson—I've done it. You were going to be a clergyman, and you threw it up at my bidding. A good thing, too; there is one less disgrace to a church disgraced too often already. You were a gentleman—clever, and prudent, and well spoken of; and now you're a by-word for an idle, dissipated scamp. You were engaged to a good woman—a woman with money, which you were to live on; a woman who loved and trusted you as I did; and you came offering your vile love to me and betraying her, little thinking that all the while you had lost her and her money too. Aye, whiten now if you like. There's a man who hates you, and who has been waiting my leave to spoil your game there for a long time. He did it two days ago, when I told him I was going to marry M. de Gesvrolles, and leave England and you to yourselves. What! you thought De Gesvrolles was a cur of your own sort, did you? You never guessed that he was watching over me like the father I had lost, saving me from the recklessness and misery your conduct would have driven me to; that when your treachery lost me faith in God and man, his chivalrous honesty saved me from ruin; that he would have thrashed or shot you like a dog long ago, only that as you warred against women, I

swore a woman should punish you. Perhaps you don't guess that he is here now, waiting for you to finish your last treachery before he turns you out of the house, which you ought to have died rather than set your foot in. Yes, come in, M. de Gesvrolles. I have done with the liar now—come in."

And M. de Gesvrolles came in—lifting the velvet portière leisurely and quietly; and smiling down with cool, saturnine irony on the wretched boy, who stood there, white, gasping, almost beside himself with shame, rage, and horror combined.

"Calm yourself, my angel," he said, taking Minnie's hand and raising it to his lips, as she turned, flushed, panting with excitement, and trembling in every warm, passionate vein to meet him. "Pour vous, M. Kinnardson, allez vous en tout de suite, si vous ne voulez pas qu'on vous chasse comme un rat qu'il ne vaut pas la peine d'écraser."

"M. de Gesvrolles," cried Merle, hoarse with fury, and the sense of ignominy crushing back upon his hot and quivering breath, "this is not your house, but Miss Dynevor's. I make no answer to her insults, because she is a woman; but you, old as you are, you shall not escape giving me satisfaction for this."

"Qu'est ce que cela veut dire?" demanded De Gesvrolles, satirically, and touching the bell as he spoke. "Ce p'tit misère n'entend pas que cette maison-ci est à moi—moi, voyez vous, mon garçon, et à nulle autre. De plus, cette dame," and he drew Minnie's hand through his arm, and held it there; "n'est plus Mdle. Dynevor, comme vous l'avez nommé, mais, dès ce matin même, Madame la Comtesse de Gesvrolles, à votre plaisir, monsieur. Ha! Thom-mas," to the footman, who answered the bell, "show Monsieur Kinnardson to ze door. Allez. Retirez vous, monsieur, c'est dommage que vous ne soyez qu'un lâche."

The word was hardly out of his lips before Merle sprang forward, a curse shivering through his clenched teeth, through the hot foam upon his white, retracted lips. But Minnie still held her husband's arm, and held him back; the servant too stepped forward hurriedly; and, choked with passion though he was, Merle knew better than to provoke public scandal by appearing as the leader in an unseemly row. Sullenly, and like a bated animal, he drew back, saying, with a bitter scorn, which only provoked a

smile on the two faces looking down on him—

"Well for you, M. de Gesvrolles, that your wife, or whatever this young lady is, protects you. It is only for a time. Tomorrow you shall hear from me."

"Jusqu' à demain, monsieur," replied De Gesvrolles, with a courteous bow.

"But you won't, De Gesvrolles—you won't," cried Minnie, flinging her arms round her husband's neck, as the door closed on them. "Thank you, thank you a thousand times, for keeping your word till now. If you had touched him, if you had laid a finger on him, I should never have forgiven myself. Oh, how I will love you for this! You shall never see me in a passion again." Then, in a lower tone, and with a deeper crimson in the flushed cheeks, "De Gesvrolles, were you ashamed of me? Ladies do not get into passions, and revenge themselves; but I am not a lady—I am only a common girl."

"You are a French countess, and the wife of a French gentleman, *belle amie*," the old man answered, gravely and fondly. "Du reste, revenge for a father's death is sacred; but, Minnie, it is ended now. For the future, we will forget this little man has been."

And Merle? Blinded and maddened by raging disgrace, he never knew how he got home.

At first one only idea filled his mind, that which had absorbed Minnie—vengeance; but even that gave way ere long before utter, overwhelming despair. He had lost all—his love, his honour, his good name, even his means of living—for this one end, to be scorned, mocked at, and turned from the house like a dog. His head seemed whirling round. His limbs shook under him as if he had an ague. The walls of his shabby sitting-room seemed to heave and sway like the waves of a sea. Only one thing looked firm and steady—the water-colour portrait of a girl with grave, sweet eyes, looking pityingly out upon him; and, as if struck by some invisible hand, he fell forward in his chair, his head upon the table, his dry lips gasping out the one word—

"Enid!—Enid!"

As in the Bible the prodigal exclaimed—"I will arise and go to my Father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against Heaven and before thee, and am no more worthy to be called thy son," so a great, over-

powering desire came over Merle's aching, fevered heart to go back to his childhood's home, and the one friend who had never turned from him. He forgot what Minnie had said about his confession being forestalled. He thought only of the blessing of laying his burning hands in her true, cool palms, and telling her all, everything. He knew she would never thrust him from her, load him with reproaches, or taunt him with his disgrace. Even if he had lost her for a wife, she would be friend and sister to him still. Even if she bade him "Go, work out your repentance," her forgiveness, her love and prayers would go with him; and perhaps some day, some distant day, when the work was done, and—

What was that?

Only a letter lying on the table near his feverish, restless fingers—a letter with the Marshton Fallows post-mark—a letter not in Enid's hand! Tearing it open, he saw the broad, bold signature of Jack Leyburn; and below, these words—

"My sister has read this; and fully concurs in my decision, to which she signs her name;" and then, rather faint, but quite legible, the well-known writing of

"ENID LEYBURN."

For a moment he felt as though he were falling, but steadied himself by a strong effort; and with a dull fire before his eyes, with a lump of burning lead beating to and fro in his brain, read the words which told him the worst that was left to tell.

All was already known; and from that day the old home was closed against him; and the relations he had deceived were as strangers whom he might never trouble—never molest any more. They, too, had—*done with him!*

It was the final blow—the crowning shock—upsetting the last weak outposts of that overtried brain. With an inarticulate cry, a feeble clutch at the darkness swooping down on him, Merle fell—fell as if brained by the stroke of a hatchet—face foremost on the floor.

AT THE NORTH POLE.

IN TWO CHAPTERS.—I.

ON Tuesday, the 19th of June, 18—, I stood on the North Cape at midnight; below me, in the line of light shimmering from the sun on the northern horizon down

to the rocks at my feet, lay my little yacht. Behind me lay—as Teufelsdröckh says, under the same circumstances—“all Europe and Asia fast asleep, except the watchmen.” In this silence and solitude Carlyle’s description of the Clothes Philosopher at this North Cape at midnight rose in my memory, particularly his possession of that “sufficient Birmingham horse pistol,” with which he dismissed the “man or monster” who came “scrambling from amongst the rock hollows” up towards him. Since his visit revolvers have been invented, with one of which valuable companions I was furnished.

I began wondering whether any hyperborean inhabitant would, in a similar manner, appear to me for some unknown purpose; when most opportunely appeared the very individual, apparently, who had approached Teufelsdröckh on that old June midnight. Having, perhaps, more confidence in my six-shooter than Teufelsdröckh had in his one barrel, I permitted the stranger to advance within convenient talking distance. I then perceived, to my surprise, that his features were those which we usually attribute to the descendants of Norman ancestors. His face was pale, his hair and beard dark, and there was nothing brutish or ferocious in his appearance. On the contrary, his countenance was full of intelligence. I at once determined that the “sufficient Birmingham horse pistol” was not needed on this occasion, and returned it, like Teufelsdröckh, into my “interior reservoir.”

He was clad, much after the North Russian manner, in shaggy skins. I therefore addressed him in the Russian language, of which I knew a little, asking him if he was a resident in the neighbourhood, or merely a visitor like myself. He replied that he was only an occasional visitor to that spot, which was endeared to him by old memories. We then conversed in German for a short time; but as I am not very well acquainted with that language, I asked him if he would use French instead. In this he seemed equally at home; and to my surprise, when quoting some English author, I found he spoke our British tongue with all the facility of a native. I had heard that educated Russian gentlemen were extraordinary linguists, and I therefore concluded that I had met with one of these accomplished individuals, and under this impres-

sion continued to converse with him for some time.

Happening to mention Carlyle’s “Sartor Resartus” to him, and how he had risen up from among the rocks and come upon my solitude, just as a similar invasion occurred to Teufelsdröckh on the same spot, he told me that he had often been amused at the description, as, in fact, he was the “shaggy monster” who retreated before the “sufficient Birmingham horse pistol” of the great philosopher, whom he had thus encountered during one of his visits. I invited him to accompany me to my vessel, when he gave me a counter invitation to go aboard his yacht with him, and pointed out a schooner of somewhat larger tonnage than mine, lying near the shore. I expressed surprise at not having seen anything of it before; but he informed me that there was a close, land-locked bay about half a mile to the eastward, with which very few persons were acquainted, and in which she generally remained while in these regions.

We descended to the sea, and I went on board his vessel with him, sending my own boat with orders to the captain to keep within hail of the stranger ship. I noticed that it was fitted up more like an Arctic explorer than an ordinary yacht. On my remarking this to the owner, he said that he used it almost entirely in the Arctic regions, as he very rarely went farther south than Drontheim.

“What!” I said, “do you really mean that you spend your time in these inhospitable and inclement regions?”

“Yes,” he replied, with a smile; “but I assure you that your estimate of them is not at all a correct one. There are lands which possess advantages which none other upon earth possess. You have heard, I presume, of the open Polar Sea?”

I replied, “Certainly; and that it was a cherished intention of my heart to some day attempt to penetrate to it, and sail on its unknown waters.”

“Not so unknown as you imagine,” said he.

“Indeed!” I cried; “you astonish me. Do you know anything of them? Have you sailed on them?”

“I have,” he replied, “often, and for years past. I only left them a short time since, and am now returning to them.”

“Oh!” I exclaimed, “can I not follow you, and also visit that wonderful region?”

"No," he replied, "your boat is not built for such an expedition. But I will make you an offer I have never made to any one before; and that is, that you accompany me in my vessel. I have reasons for making this proposition which I may some day tell you. At present I offer to take you, and will promise to bring you back to this place either in next June or some June succeeding, as the state of the ice will allow. All you have to do is to order your yacht to be here from the 1st of June to the 31st of July in every year until you return to it. Or, if you like it better, I will stretch down south to Aberdeen, and land you there."

"I joyfully accept," I said, "your wonderful offer; and if you will permit me to adopt your last proposal, I will send my yacht home with letters, and look forward to reaching Britain again at Aberdeen."

The next few hours were briskly occupied in making the necessary arrangements for my remove on board the other vessel, and in writing letters to be sent home by my own yacht; so that it was not until some time after we had parted company, and when we had nearly lost sight of my late ocean home, that I began really to examine the ship and the people with whom I had thus strangely become connected. I must confess that, on reflection, I had grave doubts as to my conduct. I feared that I had been foolishly precipitate. I commenced a careful examination of the manners and appearance of the men composing the crew; and it was with decided feelings of apprehension that I perceived there was something uncanny about them, and that I observed a strange calmness—a slow, unhasting, certain way of doing things; as if what was to be done was inevitable, but as there was all eternity to do it in, there was no occasion for fuss or hurry. They rarely spoke, and their eyes had a deep, strange, far-away look, as if they belonged to souls which were inhabiting bodies which did not belong to them, and were "wearying" to be at rest in their own. All the crew were nearly of the same age. All had the same general expression, but complexion and hair differed. If I asked any question, or spoke to any of them, they answered in as few words as possible, and evidently avoided conversation.

In my host I observed traces of the same peculiarities; but these, had not my atten-

tion been attracted to the singular manners of the crew, I should not have noticed. As it was, I determined, as soon as possible, to obtain some explanation, and I turned in to get some sleep, and dreamed that I was on board Frey's vessel, *Skidbladnir*, which, as soon as the sails were set, was wafted by favourable breezes to her destination.

It was not until I had been two days among my new acquaintances that I had an opportunity of a quiet and undisturbed chat with my host. Up to this time, I did not know his name, nor was I aware that he was acquainted with mine. However, on mentioning it to him, and adding that I was an Englishman, he told me that he had discovered both those facts from my boatmen, before he had accosted me on the North Cape. He then gave me his name as Hugh Willoughby, also an Englishman. I asked whether he was a descendant of the Sir Hugh Willoughby who went on a voyage of Arctic discovery in the year 1553, and who never returned.

"I am the very same person," said he; "and now that I have broken the ice, to use a phrase suitable to our present locality, I shall speak freely to you such things as will, until supported by what you will by and by see for yourself to be true, appear to you as wild imaginations of a lunatic."

"I must say," I replied, "that your assertion that you are upwards of three hundred years old is rather startling; and I don't see how you can prove it to me, unless you can get me born over again at the same time as yourself, and manage that we may live all our lives together!"

It was really difficult to know what to believe. Of course, I at first decided that he was mad, or, at any rate, a monomaniac.

But, I began to think, would not most men think me certainly mad to have come away on this wild goose chase with an utterly unknown individual, at a moment's invitation? I was forced to acknowledge that my actions would appear the very reverse of sensible, and that, were I to relate them to any friend, he would as little believe I had done such a thing (unless I was mad) as I could believe the assertion of Sir Hugh Willoughby that he had lived ever since the early part of the sixteenth century, whereas he now only appeared to be a man in the prime of life.

In our conversation, I must confess that I treated him as, in some degree, of un-

sound mind. I, however, subsequently discovered that all he had told me was capable of verification, and that his marvellous narrative was yet another corroboration of the correctness of that old adage which tells us that "truth is stranger than fiction."

I will proceed to throw into a connected form the particulars which he related to me of his life, and of the mode and place in which it had been spent since he had been supposed to be dead, but when he was only swallowed up in the recesses of the Polar regions.

"If you have read the narrative of the early Polar expeditions," said Willoughby, "as I doubt not you have, you will remember that after my vessel and that of Chancellor were parted in a great gale we never met again, and I, with all my crew, was supposed to have been lost. Chancellor, after many adventures and difficulties, reached England again. We were driven north, and after some time perceived that we were in a sea free from ice, and in a much warmer climate. We naturally supposed that we had been driven south; but, as soon as we could take an observation, discovered that we were farther north than any person, to the best of our knowledge, had ever penetrated before. We sailed about for several days, in different directions, and at length descriing land, we made for it. We found a strong current setting in towards an opening in the mountains, which served to enclose the country, and ere long entered a large river, up which we were carried by the current. This seemed extraordinary to us, as an inversion of the usual course of nature—no signs appearing on the coast of any tidal action, and rivers usually running down into the sea, and not from the sea inland. We therefore anchored, and made explorations on land and in boats. We soon found traces of inhabitants; and following them up, we arrived at a town situated on the river, about five miles from where our vessel lay. We made acquaintance with the people, and told them how it was that we were driven on their hospitality. We were, of course, surprised beyond conception at finding a colony in such a situation, and at first believed that we were on some island off the northern shore of Russia. Even when we were told that we were on a land encompassing the North Pole, and which, in the

ordinary sense of the word, was undiscovered, being unknown to the greater part of the world, we could hardly bring ourselves to credit the information; and it took some time to accustom our minds to the idea that we were, as it might be, in the world and out of the world at the same time! It was not until we had been some weeks in the country that we observed what you have already noticed—that every one appeared about the same age. No doubt the presence of young people and children prevented our remarking any such peculiarity at once. But we, ere long, found that there were no aged persons to be seen. We were then informed that no one became old in this country—that is, 'in the ordinary sense of the word, as applied to living beings. All remained in the full vigour of life. They grew up to that period, as in other countries, and were there stationary. Even persons from the outer world, who had arrived there as we had done, and who were declining in years, here gradually renewed their powers, and became again of full vigour. This is capable of a very simple explanation. Here alone are found all those plants, waters, and substances which complete the system of diet required to preserve our physical powers, and reinstate those parts which use wears away. In other parts of the world, food is found capable of sustaining certain portions of our animal economy; and, to a certain limited extent, of making up for all the waste continually going on in our bodies. Here exist all the elements to complete the operation. The consequence being a life undecaying and, as far as experience went, eternal. The Rosicrucians have always held the extreme probability of such simples existing in the laboratory of Nature; but have failed in discovering the few last elements required to render efficient any elixir vitæ.

"It is not at all unlikely that the Rosicrucians obtained their knowledge from some tradition of this northern country, if, indeed, they did not originally spring from it themselves—a theory supported by the probability that they took their name from the Parhelia, frequently seen in these regions, often having much the appearance of a rosy cross. Here, perhaps, was the home of the lost tribes. Here may have been the Arcadia of the ancients. This is rendered almost a certainty from the etymology of the word; Arcadia and Arctic being both

derived from arcos, a bear; and these regions being emphatically those of bears.

"This country appears to have been rediscovered by the lost Danish colony which vanished from Greenland in a northerly direction, and to trace which Denmark has, within the last two hundred years, sent several unsuccessful expeditions. A notion very generally prevailed that these people were still existing, although separated from the southern world by a vast barrier of ice. This idea, we now know, was founded in fact. Very few vessels have ever approached this country. The nearest on record is that of Captain Wilson, who, about June, 1754, got through the ice, and advanced to latitude 83° , in a clear and open sea. Apprehending danger from so unexpected a circumstance, he turned back. At the same time, Captain Guy was carried to nearly the same point. The sea was remarkably open at that period, and had these voyagers proceeded a little farther they would have sighted our Polar land, and might have remained with us. I will now explain to you how it is that we lose members of our society, and how it happens that our condition and country have been hidden from the rest of the world. Many of our inhabitants have gone back into Southern life; others have returned from time to time, renewed their strength, and gone back into the great world. In all periods of history certain persons have entered society who have been remembered as bearing the same appearance, and being of the same age, as when last seen, some half-century before. Most of these have been treated as charlatans; but, in truth, were the only true Rosicrucians, the inhabitants of our Polar country. Of these, Cagliostro is the best known modern instance. He is now with us. Others, after having lived long lives here, have wished to change into another and a higher state of existence; and by entering again the outer world, have passed through the gates of death into immortality, and thus obtained their desire of everlasting rest. In Bulwer's 'Zanoni' (who was one of our oldest inhabitants, and a dear friend of mine) you will find depicted all the thoughts and feelings that produce this wish to quit a world-long, earthly life for an eternal, heavenly one.

"Some of our people formerly, having foolishly talked of our country, and persisted in numerous statements and relations

of our condition and life, have, naturally enough, been considered mad, and died in confinement; their raging anger at being deprived of the opportunity of regaining our shores, and all their ravings on the subject, rendering it certain to all that they were maniacs of the most incurable kind. Others of our travellers into these countries, having heard that their friends had perished in this miserable manner, took warning from their unhappy fate; and now all are so inspired with the great danger of saying anything on the subject of their life and country that they carefully avoid mentioning anything connected with them. Thus, of late years, nothing has become known of these regions.

"Had I not met you alone, and in a place far from the haunts of what is called 'society,' I should never have done what I have done. Had I asked you at a party in London or Paris to accompany me to the North Pole, and given you all the particulars I now have given you, you would have laughed, and treated the whole matter as a jest; or, if not as a jest, you would have set me down as a madman. But meeting you on the North Cape, I ventured to plunge boldly into the matter. I told you also, you will remember, that I had other reasons for requesting your company on board my vessel, and that I would communicate them to you. I will now do so; and you will remark that I have not done so until you were far removed from any possible avoidance of carrying out your plan of accompanying me into the open Polar Sea. I have practised this reticence purposely, as had I told you before your yacht had departed what I have now related to you, I feel convinced that you would have set me down as a madman, and have returned to the Southern seas in your own vessel. You have now no choice, and must prove the correctness of my narrative by actual experience. However, to my story. It is somewhat of a romance, and elucidates what I have already shown, as to how necessary it is for us to keep our own counsel as to our extraordinary life and residence. The history is this: In one of my visits to European society, I encountered your mother. (I am aware that she has now been dead for many years.) I was then living at Cheltenham, in the character of a gentleman of independent means, and mixed in the society of the place. I fell in love with your mother, and, in fact, we

became engaged. In a weak moment I divulged to her the secret of my name and my existence. From that moment I saw my doom. She looked on me as a madman; and fear was in her eyes, as she told me never to speak to her again, and to leave the place at once, or she would cause me to be confined as a lunatic. I cursed myself for having been so utterly foolish; but could do nothing, and left the town that day. During various visits to England, I have become acquainted with all her life, and have watched your growth. As a proof of my remembrance of you, you may recall occasional presents and letters from 'An old friend of your mother's'—these were from me. I learnt enough from your boatmen at the North Cape to make me think it was the son of my old love who was near me, and one glance at your face showed me such a strong likeness to her unforgotten features that I knew I was not mistaken. Now you know why I asked you, on such a short acquaintance, to become my guest, and why I did not say more until now. I candidly tell you, I know you fancy me insane; but I so fully expected this, that I can easily wait the short time which will elapse before you will see for yourself that all I have related to you is the simple truth. You will visit our country and our people, and can then judge for yourself whether you will remain with us, or become what may be called a travelling member of our community."

ANGUISH IN PRINT.

IN THE STRICTEST CONFIDENCE.

TEAR THE TWENTY-EIGHTH.

THE FLIGHT.

ON the night before the one appointed for my flight with Achille, I sat down and wrote two letters home—one the usual weekly affair, the other a tear-bedewed prayer for pardon; when I detailed the full particulars of the step which I had taken, pointing out at the same time the uselessness of attempting pursuit; for long before I could be discovered I should be the wife of the man who possessed my heart, truly and thoroughly. Yes; that letter was tear-bedewed, and there was something very mournful in writing home upon such an occasion. But the die was cast, and I felt quite relieved when I had placed both

letters in their envelopes; and then, leaving one for enclosure in the letter-bag of the house, I secured the other in my bosom, and soon after retired to rest.

Yes, I retired to rest, but not to sleep, and rose the next morning pale and dejected; while how I went through my lessons that day I cannot think now. However, to keep suspicion entirely at a distance, when Achille came we took not the slightest notice of one another; and, so that there should be no miscarriage of our undertaking, not so much as a single line passed from one to the other. But just as he was going I gave him one look, to show him that I was worthy of his trust, and that, come what would, I should keep my word.

The time had already been fixed for twelve, so that with a carriage in waiting we could be driven across the country, twelve miles to the neighbouring town, where the main line of railway passed—ours at Allsham being but a branch—and there we could catch the night mail as it whirled through—or rather, as it stopped; and then, conveyed to London, we could leave by an early train the same morning for Scotland. All this had been fixed by Achille, and conveyed to me in a note at his last lesson. And how deliciously romantic it all seemed, and how elated I felt, in spite of my trepidation! Away to Scotland, to be his—his own. And then, perhaps in sunny France, live a life like some golden dream, from which we could look back to the days of slavery at the Cedars. Oh, it was too much!—the thoughts of it even made me tremble; and as I lay pretending to be asleep that night, I thought my heart would have burst with its emotions, as it beat and bounded trying to be free.

Is it always so, that people will talk and do the very opposite to that which you wish? Upon other nights, when I wished for half an hour's chat with Clara or Effie, they would be too sleepy to talk; but this night they seemed to be horribly wakeful, while the noises in the house went on as if they would never be still. I had been in quite a flutter for some time, owing to my having somehow mislaid the last note Achille had sent me. Where it could be I knew not, unless it had slipped down through my clothes; but that seemed to be impossible, and I lay hoping that it was still somewhere in my things. Every other letter, after ten

readings, I had carefully destroyed; but this one I dared not burn, for fear that it should contain instructions that I might forget. Even though I had carefully learned it by heart, yet I fancied that I might again wish to refer to it. The very thought of its being found put me in a cold perspiration; but things all grew so quiet at last, that my courage revived, and feeling now so thoroughly embarked in the undertaking, I summoned all my strength of mind and waited.

Twelve o'clock, and not a sound to be heard—not even the baying of the dog, which, in the excitement of the preparations, I had forgotten; while it seemed that he would now be the stumbling-block in my way. But I was prepared to meet every danger; and slipping out of bed, I crept out of the room to the empty place at the end of the passage, where I had conveyed what few things I should require, while, of course, I had not undressed. And now—bonneted, shawled, and gloved, and with my reticule bag in my hand—I stood listening with beating pulses to the faint sounds yet to be heard in the house. Now it was the ticking of the clock, now the chirping of the crickets in the kitchen; while above all, heavily and loudly, came the beating of the rain upon the skylight, telling of how bitter a night it was, and I shuddered as I thought of poor Achille standing in the wet.

Our plans had been well made; and, screwing up my courage, I stepped along the passage down to the first floor, and reached the large staircase window in safety, slid it up, and, to my intense joy, there was poor, wet Achille standing at the top of a strong step-ladder, ready to assist me down.

"Enfin, mon ange," he whispered, as I climbed tremblingly upon the sill as quickly as possible; for I had heard words spoken at the foot of the stairs, and I knew directly what they meant, as dining-room and drawing-room doors were thrown open, and lights streamed out. Yes, I knew what Clara afterwards told me was the case—Miss Furness had picked up the note, and they were all collected in the hall and passage, ready to capture me when I descended, little thinking that the window mentioned meant that upon the first floor.

"Now dis foot—now dat," he hissed through his teeth; and, somehow, I don't know in what way, he guided me down the

ladder, to which I clung tightly, wet as it was; and, as lights and faces appeared at the open window, Achille dragged the ladder down, and we were in full flight across the lawn; while he supported me with one hand, and trailed the ladder after us with the other.

"Dere goes de confound bell," cried Achille. "No, no," he whispered, "not yet—don't faint, mon ange."

"But the dog? Where is the dog?" I exclaimed.

"Having one great pound of steaks and two mutton bones," he replied.

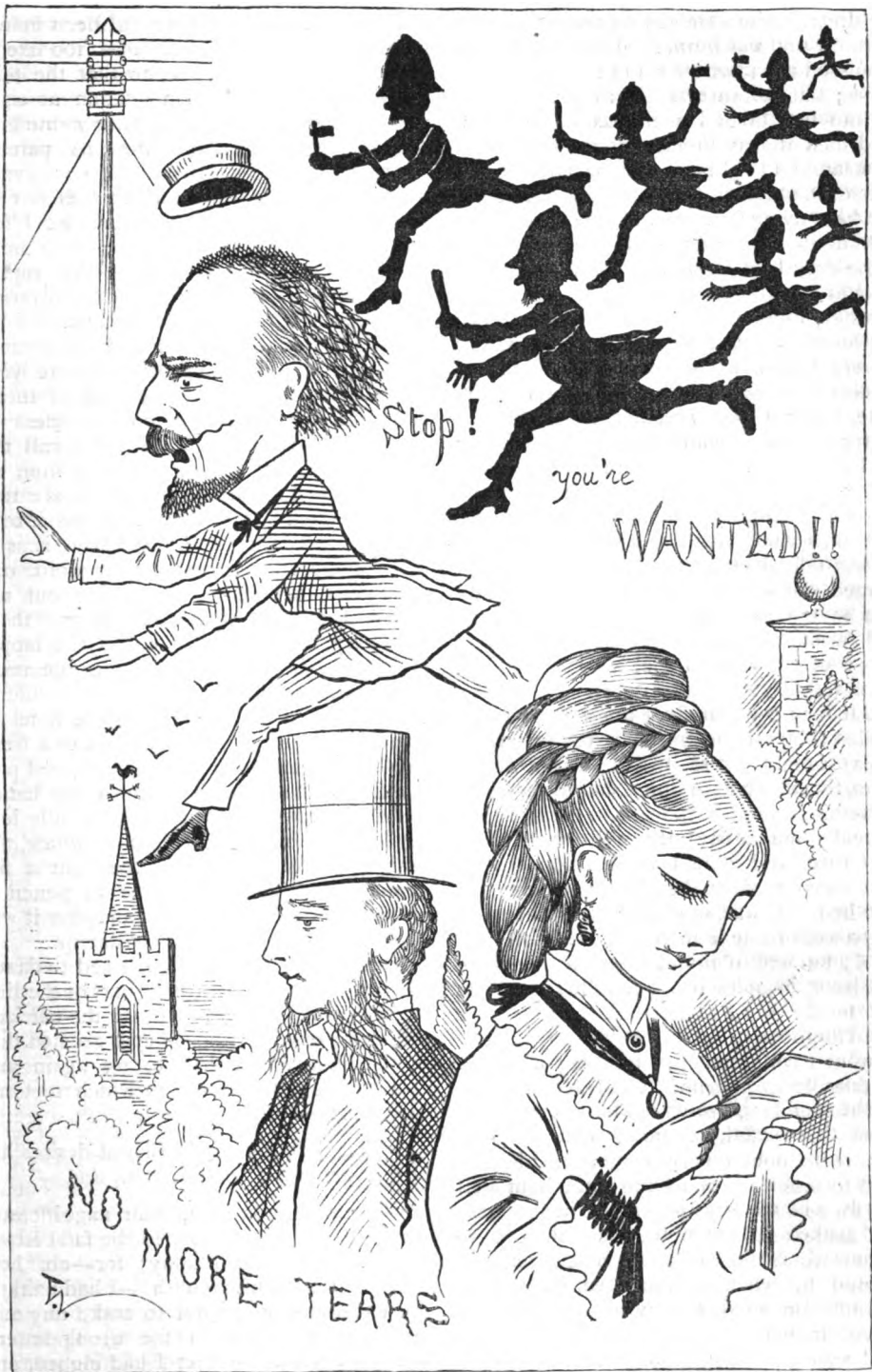
And then, with the murmur of voices behind, and the bell ringing loudly, we hurried through the wet bushes to the wall, where he placed the ladder, and this time nerving myself, I mounted it boldly, and before I knew where I was I found myself helped down into a carriage drawn close up at the side—that is to say, into the cart; for Achille had been so unfortunate that he could not procure a post-chaise. And, with an umbrella to protect me from the inclemency of the weather, I sat upon the hard seat between Achille and the rough man who was the driver.

"That ere was the pleeceman as we passed," growled the latter, directly after we had started.

"P'raps they shall want him at de house," replied Achille, laughing.

And then on we drove, for fully an hour and a half, through the dark night, and through the rain, which would keep coming, blown by the gusts, right underneath the umbrella, in spite of all *he* did to protect me. And in spite of all my efforts and the tender words of Achille—whispered to me in his own dear tongue—I could not keep from shivering; while somehow all this did not seem nice, and romantic, and pleasant.

Oh, that night! I shall never forget it, though it all seems whirled up together in one strange, gloomy dream of rain, and darkness, and wind, and cold, and a stumbling horse, and a rough, stably-smelling, wet driver, smoking a strong pipe, and shouting to the horse to "Harru!" and wet straw, and Achille without a great coat, and the umbrella so blown by the wind that it took two hands to hold it, and the points would go into the driver's eye. Then there was poor Achille, wet and suffering from the cold and waiting in the rain; and his hands so cramped with holding the umbrella; and



the dreary, miserable station fire so low that it would not warm him. And after he had dismissed the man, he could not get out his purse; but fortunately I was able to pay for the two first-class tickets to London. And then almost directly there was a vision of steam, and lights, and noise, and the last train dashed into the wet station, where the rain kept flying from the wind, which seemed to hunt it along; and then we were inside one of the dark blue cloth lined carriages, where I could see by the dim light of the thick, scratchy, bubble lamp that there were two gentlemen; while I felt so ill, and cold, and shivery I should not have known how to keep up, if one of them, seeing my wet state, had not kindly passed a little flask of sherry to Achille, who made me drink some.

How I trembled, and felt that they were looking me through and through; and I felt sure that I had seen them both before, and that they knew me, and would go straight off and tell papa; but fortunately they both seemed sleepy, and curled up in their wrappers in the two corners, after one of them had insisted upon lending us a great skin thing, which was so nice and warm and comfortable.

But they say that there are a great many hidden things in nature that yet remain to be explained; and really this must be one of them, this which I am now about to mention. Something would keep trying the whole time to make me believe that all this was not very nice, and that I would much rather have been back at the Cedars, snug in my own bed. It was, of course, all nonsense—only a weak fancy prompted by my disordered mind; but still it would keep coming back and back, in spite of all Achille's whispers and tender words, till at last I really think I had forgotten all about the "sunny South" in what I could not help thinking were the miseries of the present. I crushed all those thoughts at last, down, down into the dark depths of oblivion; for I was allowing Achille to hold my cold hand in his, and tried to make out what the train kept saying, for as distinctly as could be in the noise and rattle, and whirl and rush, there were certain words seemed to be formed, and it seemed to me that those words were—"Blind, conceited, foolish girl!—blind, conceited, foolish girl!" over and over again, till I would not listen to them any longer, as we sped on and on, nearer and nearer to great London.

I supposed that my note had been found, but I felt that it must have been too late to do us any harm; for I knew that the telegraph clerk left Allsham Station at eight o'clock, through Mrs. Blunt once wanting to send a message to one of the girls' parents when she was ill, and they could not have it until the next morning, which was not so soon as they could get a letter. So I felt quite at rest upon that score; while now, thanks to the sherry and the skin rug, I began to get rid of the miserable shivering that had made me feel so wretched.

Only to think of it!—on and on, towards London, where papa and mamma were lying peacefully asleep. The thoughts of them, and their peace, and unconsciousness of what was happening, made me recall the letter I had written, and draw it from its hiding-place to hand to Achille to see that it was posted. But before I passed it over to him, I felt that I could not send it as it was. I must insert one tender word, one more kind sentence. So, taking out my pencil, I screwed up the point, and then, with very little difficulty, raised the lappel of the envelope—for really our gummed envelopes are so very insecure—while I knew that we must stop at some hotel in London where I could obtain wax or a fresh envelope. So I took out the note, and prepared to write upon the palm of my hand; but seeing what I meant to do, Achille lent me his hat, upon the crown of which, for desk, I laid my note as, by the light of the dim lamp, I began to trace in pencil a second—let me see; no, I remember it was a fourth—loving, prayerful postscript.

Tiresome light!—how it seemed to dance about!—while I thought that part of the line must be much out of repair, for the carriage wobbled excessively. My eyes seemed dim as the light, and I had to try again and again to read the postscript which met my frightened gaze:

"Mrs. Fortesquieu de Blount desires her best respects and compliments, and—"

"Qu'est ce que c'est, mon ange?" murmured Achille, as I dropped the fatal letter, and nearly swooned away; for—oh, how could I have been so foolish!—I had marked the envelopes so as not to make any mistake, and then put in the wrong letters, sending word home that I had eloped, and giving them ample notice of my intentions.

I caught the letter up again, and tried to

pass it off as nothing—only a sudden pang, for I dare not tell Achille; but who can imagine my agony as we sped on for the rest of our journey? for we could not converse, on account of the other passengers, and my brain seemed in a whirl.

All at once the train began to slacken, and, in the comparative quiet, I hoped and thought possible a dozen things: the letter might have miscarried, or been sent wrong; it might have been lost; papa and mamma might have been out—plenty of things might have happened in my favour; and then we drew up at another dismal station, whose bleared lights we could see through the rain-spotted windows. Here the tickets were collected, and I felt sure the ticket collector looked suspiciously at both Achille and me; while, as we waited, I could hear them clanking in the milk tins into the great wild beast cage upon wheels that they have upon the night trains of that and, I suppose, all railways. But, just as we were about to start, the door opened again, and a wet man jumped in, and sat there staring at us all the way up.

London at last, in the darkness and misery of the early morning! It was of no use to try and keep them back, the tears would come, while even the reassuring pressure of Achille's hand was of no avail to cheer me; for, oh! it did look so very, very, very miserable in the dark, cheerless, wet time, and I hardly knew how to stand.

"This way, sir," said a man who seemed to be one of the guards, for he was dressed just like one. "Cab all ready, sir."

"Merci," replied Achille; and I clung to his arm as we followed the civil guard under the long row of dismal hanging lamps, some alight and some out, past the hissing engine, with its bright light, and warm, ruddy, glowing fire; and at that moment I did so wish that I was a happy, careless engine driver, warming myself in the cheery glow—anything but what I then was; for I was dreadfully unhappy, and, I am afraid, even a little disappointed that my fears had had no suite, so strange a contradiction is a woman's heart. However, on we went to where another man was waiting by a cab, and as soon as we approached he opened the door.

Weak, faint, and miserable, I hurried in, and leaned back trembling in a corner, expecting Achille the next moment would be at my side; when, to my horror, I saw a slight scuffle take place, and Achille dragged

off. The guard-like man jumped into the cab, shut the door after him, and pulled up the glass; while at the same moment the horrid wet cab jangled off, and the guard lowered the front window and gave some instructions to the driver.

"Oh, stop, stop!" I cried, in agony, as I jumped up. "There is some mistake. Where is Monsieur Achille—the gentleman who was with me?"

"That clinches what didn't want no clinching, my dear," said the horrid wretch, shouting at me, for the cab made so much noise—"that clinches it, my dear. I hadn't a doubt before; while as to now, why, it's right as right, and there's no mistake. Now sit down, my dear. I shan't hurt you, so don't be frightened; and it's of no use for you to try and jump out, because I don't mean to let you. There now, see what you've done—you've broke the window! Not very surprising, though, for they always makes cab windows of the thinnest glass they can get hold of for the benefit of their fares. Make a handsome thing out of the profits, some owners do, being mostly broken by noisy swells who can pay up. Helps the shoeing bill, you know, my dear. Now, do sit still. What a struggling little bird it is!"

I was horrified and mad; for the wretch had caught me in his arms as I started from my seat and beat at the window till it fell shattered to pieces; while, in spite of my struggles, he held me down upon the seat by his side.

"It's all right, my dear Miss Laura Bozerne. And you needn't be in the least bit afraid of me; for I'm an old married man, sent by some one you know very well, working under the advice of my wife, and I'm to be depended upon. So sit still for a little while, my dove, for you're saved out of the hawk's claws this time."

What could I do but sink back with a hysterical sob, my mind in a state of chaos? I really, I'm sure, did not know then whether I was pleased or sorry, though I had felt it incumbent upon me to struggle a little at first. I'm sure my brains were all anyhow, as I wondered who the man was by my side, and where he was taking me. Had Achille betrayed me and fled? Oh, no—impossible! Papa must have taken steps to stop us; and this wretch by my side was, I felt sure, a detective.

Up and down street after street, all dark, dismal, and deserted, as I could see when

the wretch rubbed the steaming glass with his sleeve. The lamps were all burning; and here and there we passed a policeman, and, every time the light shone upon their wet capes, fresh tears gushed from my eyes as I thought of Achille and his probable fate. Then, too, I thought again of where they were bearing me. Was I to be imprisoned—taken before a magistrate? Oh, it was horrible! and the long, jangling ride seemed as though it would never end.

"Now, that's what I call sensible, my dear," said the wretch, all at once—shouting so that I'm sure the driver could almost have heard. "Some people, you see, never do know when they're took, but keep on fighting agen it when there's no more chance of getting away than flying. That's right, take it coolly, and a good cry will do you no end of good, I dare say."

Then, finding me quiet and resigned, my captor seemed to take but little more notice of me, only turning his head towards me from time to time as we passed a lamp. I would have given anything to have known where we were going; but, of course, under the circumstances, I could not summon courage enough to ask; but at last I seemed to recognise places that we passed, first one and then another becoming familiar, till it seemed almost like returning home from a ball. And—yes—no—yes—no—yes, it was our own house before which we had driven up, and the driver was ringing furiously at the bell!

Oh, yes, it was all plain enough now. I had been entrapped and brought home, and I knew that I had betrayed myself by my own folly.

"Oh, Achille, Achille!" I murmured.

"He's all right, miss, I dare say," said my captor, who seemed to possess a preternatural sharpness of hearing; "and I should think that we had better sit here in the dry till the door opens, though I dare say that won't be long, for they expec us."

And he was right; for, with swimming eyes, I saw the flash of light, while I could not help blessing the darkness of the cold, winterly morn, which hid me from the gaze of the vulgar. The people on either side were doubtless asleep, and there was no one visible but a policeman, who helped to carry me over the wet pavement into the hall, where, trembling and dizzy, I stood for a moment before papa in his dressing-gown, and then really and truly I fainted.

TEAR THE TWENTY-NINTH.

HEIGHO!

I NEVER saw Achille again, and I never once dared to ask either mamma or papa about his fate; for they were both so kind and tender all the time that I was seriously ill from the cold, exposure, and agitation to which I had been subjected. It was quite a month before I was able to go out again; while now—heigho!—would that I had never had a heart!

I never saw Achille again; but never, oh, never will I believe that newspaper report, though papa marked it all round thickly with a quill pen, and left it where I could not avoid seeing it! It was in one of the horrible evening papers, and said that one Achille Cochonet had been committed for trial upon a charge of swindling; but, even if it were true, it could not have been my Achille—the soul of truth, honour, and chivalry, whom I had once known.

Shall I ever be happy again? I feel seared and blighted; and, except that pink is pleasing, I care little for dress. Papa is very kind, so is mamma, and they have never even hinted at the past; while as for the Cedars, such a place might never have been in existence. They take me to all the operas, but "Trovatore" seems to be my favourite, since I cannot help comparing the sorrows of two real individuals known to the reader with those of the fictitious people of the opera. Yes—the sorrows of Leonora and her poor Trovatore seem quite to refresh, though the sole pleasure of my life of late has been the committing of these tear-bedewed confessions to paper, for the benefit of all who may read them.

I have written again to Sœur Charité, and she sends me in return such kind, loving words. I know she would be glad were I once more beneath the shelter of her dove-like wings; but neither papa nor mamma would, I am sure, ever again listen to any proposition for me to leave home. So I practise self-denial, and try to improve upon the lessons inculcated by Mr. St. Purre, who often calls, mamma being very fond of his society.

"Eldersmere, June 4th, 1867.

"MY DEAREST LAURA—Pray excuse haste, for we are just off to 'Parigi O cara,' to see the Exposition—papa, mamma, your humble servant, and Effie Brassey. I will write at length from Paris. But just a line to say

that we are delighted to hear of your engagement, and Effie and I will be doubly delighted to be bridesmaids. What fun, though, to think of all the school frolics, and—and—but there, I won't say a word; only mind this, I mean to come and stay for months with you when you are Mrs. St. Purre. And so he is to have a living down in the country? My! what fun, to see the saintly Laura attending, basket in hand, to her poor and her Sunday school children! Heigho! and poor me without so much as an offer yet. Do, there's a dear, have a few nice fellows at the wedding, just out of pity, you know; for, only think, both Effie and I will soon be eighteen! Isn't it dreadful? We have such a jolly croquet ground here, and—but there, packing waits, and I must conclude. But, oh! what heaps I shall have to tell you when we meet! You say that the Cedars is never to be mentioned; but I must tell you that in the advertisements it is now, "Lady Principals, Mrs. Fortesquieu de Blount and Miss Furness." Good-bye, my own dear, dear pet, sweet, darling Laura; and I am, as I always shall be, in spite of hundreds of tiffs, your affectionate friend,

"CLARA FITZACRE."

THE END.

A SAVAGE PLANT.

PROFESSOR J. BURDON SANDERSON read a very interesting paper the other evening on the Mechanism of the Leaf of *Dionæa Muscipula*, and of the mode in which it catches and digests insects.

The general aspect of the plant was illustrated by a large drawing. It belongs to the order *Droseraceæ*, a very small but very natural order—*i.e.*, one of which each species exhibits the signs of original relationship very distinctly. It is one in respect of which it is also evident enough that the relationship is rather one of descent than of community of parentage; for the common peculiarities by which the plants which form it are distinguished from other plants are not possessed by all of them in anything like equal degree; so that here, as elsewhere among plants and animals, we have indications that the more perfect forms stand to the less perfect rather in the relation of descendants than that of cousins. The most striking of these peculiarities is one of

function, not of structure. It lies in this, that all the members of the order exhibit in one form or other adaptedness to one end—the catching and digesting of insects. These animal endowments, which have for some years engaged the attention of our great naturalist, are possessed by each species in a degree which in the main corresponds to the completeness of the plant's development in regard to form and structure; so that each advance from a less to a greater perfection in these respects is accompanied by an improvement in the adaptedness of the mechanism by which insects are caught and digested.

Dionæa stands alone at the head of its order; for in all respects, both as regards structure and as regards the perfection of its insect-catching mechanism, it is superior to all the rest. Like the *Droseras* of our English bogs, it requires only soft, damp moss to root in, and its roots are correspondingly simple. Its flowers possess little beauty, and for us very little interest. It is on the leaves that our attention must be fixed.

The leaf is of a very peculiar form. Its blade consists of two nearly semicircular lobes, joined together along their straight borders by a strong midrib. On to this midrib the two lobes, when the leaf is open, are set nearly at right angles with each other. The curved outer edge of each lobe is strengthened by a hem, from which some twenty spikes spring on either side, which are directed towards the concavity of the leaf. The under-surface of the leaf is bright green, smooth and glistening, and is marked with parallel streaks, which run outwards from the midrib; but the upper surface is pink, owing this colour to its being beset with little red bosses, too small to be seen with the naked eye, which are called glands. In addition to these glands, there are on each lobe three delicate hair-like spines or filaments, which are always arranged as if at the corners of a triangular space, about the middle of the upper surface. The petiole, or leaf-stalk, is of the shape of the handle of a tea spoon, the only difference being that its upper surface is channelled along the middle, instead of being flat. By its broad end it is united to the leaf by a narrow isthmus, of about half a line in breadth.

Whenever an insect, or any other object, touches, however lightly, any of the six filaments above mentioned, the lobes close

sharply upon it, just as a rat-trap closes on the animal caught; the closure is at first, however, only partial. When the leaf is thus half closed, it is easy to see what is the significance of the two sets of prongs along its edges. They are observed to be set alternately along the borders of the two lobes, so as to fit into each other as the teeth of a rat-trap do. The reason why the leaf does not at once close firmly on its prey—at first sight not very apparent—Mr. Darwin has been able to explain by observing what happens when an insect finds itself caught and attempts to escape. If it is small, it easily makes its way through the grating formed by the crossing of the teeth; and in this case the leaf expands again very gradually, and is then ready for another victim. If it is large, all its efforts to regain its liberty are futile. Repelled by its prison bars, it is driven back upon the sensitive filaments, which project into the interior of its cell, and again irritates them. By doing so, it occasions a second and more vigorous contraction of the lobes. The result is that the creature is this time not only captured, but crushed, to be eventually digested.

The leaf having thus closed, remains for a week or more in the same state. At first the two lobes are so flatly pressed against each other that the insect between them forms a bulging projection on either side. But soon a quantity of juice is secreted by the internal surface of the leaf, which as it collects distends the space occupied by the insect, which after a time becomes diffuent, and is eventually absorbed. This process of gradual liquefaction and absorption Mr. Darwin has shown by numerous experiments to be of the same nature as that by which food is digested in the stomach of the higher animals.

THE WHITE NILE.

IN speaking at the Royal Institution upon the subject of his late expedition, Sir Samuel Baker gives the following picturesque, but at the same time powerful, description of the White Nile:—

I have stopped the slave trade, but the traffic may and will be resumed should European commanders be withdrawn. Even should the White River remain pure, the slaves will be conveyed across the desert *via* Darfur and Kordofan. Large markets

will be established to which the traders will concentrate from all parts of Africa to purchase slaves. These will be dispersed in gangs, and be distributed through all the slave-dealing countries of the East.

The governors of Egyptian provinces are to a man in favour of the slave trade; thus the prohibition of slavery is to them a mine of wealth. The law gives to them the power to seize and confiscate all slaves in the hands of dealers. Thus the arrival of a caravan with 500 slaves would be tantamount to a present of £1,000 or more to the Government official, who would receive a toll of £2 a head and let them pass free.

There is a simple method in attacking this great evil that would, I am convinced, be eminently successful. It is the European influence alone that will effectually suppress the slave trade; and this same influence will alone save Turkey and Egypt from irretrievable ruin.

In a former work, "The Nile Tributaries of Abyssinia," I fully exposed the depredations of the soldiery when employed as tax collectors in the Soudan. By over-taxation and pillage by officials the peasantry are literally eaten up. Thousands upon thousands have forsaken the country, and have commenced a life of brigandage as slave-hunters among the negro tribes. Nine years ago, when I was descending the Nile from Khartoum to Berber, a distance of 200 miles by river, the fertile soil on either bank was in the highest state of cultivation. This valuable extent of country was watered by 4,000 sakyees, or water-wheels. By day and night the irrigation was continued, and the discordant hum and creaking of the machines, if disturbing a night's rest, nevertheless assured the traveller that industry was wide awake, and that prosperity would be the reward of labour. When I returned to that same country in January, 1870, I looked for the past scene in vain.

A steamer and a diabiah were awaiting me at Berber. As we steamed against the strong current for 200 miles to Khartoum I looked with astonishment and dismay upon the country. Now and then a tuft of neglected date palms might be seen; but the river banks, formerly verdant with heavy crops, had become a wilderness. Villages, once crowded, had entirely disappeared. The population was gone. The night, formerly discordant with the creaking of the water-wheels, was now silent as death.

There was not a dog to howl for a lost master. The discord of a water-wheel would to my ears have been harmony. Industry had vanished; oppression had driven the inhabitants from the soil; the most fertile land on earth had been abandoned to hyenas. This was Egyptian rule, and I was on my path to conquer fresh lands for Egypt!

This terrible desolation was caused by the Governor-General of the Soudan, who, although himself an honest man, was a fanatical Mohammedan, who left his territory to the sole care of God. He simply increased the taxes and trusted in Providence. In one year he sent to the delighted Khedive his master, at Cairo, more than £100,000 in dollars wrung from the poor peasantry of the Soudan. In the following year it was difficult to get change for a sovereign. It must be borne in mind that a tax suddenly imposed in the Soudan that would produce £100,000 surplus revenue, would be in real fact a tax of £200,000, as an equal amount is always extorted from the peasantry by the collectors.

The population of the richest portions of the Soudan thus abandoned the country, and the greater portion betook themselves to the slave trade of the White Nile, where in their turn they might trample upon the rights of others; where, as they had been plundered, they could now plunder; where they could reap the harvest of another's labour, and where, undisturbed, they might indulge in the great enterprise of slave-hunting.

Having passed through the deserted country from Berber, I arrived at Khar-toum. Nothing was ready for my expedition; but I found that the Governor-General had just prepared a squadron of eleven vessels, with several companies of regular troops, to form a settlement at the copper mines on the southern frontier of Darfur. This expedition had been placed under the command of a man named Kutchuk Ali, who was one of the most notorious ruffians and slave-traders of the White Nile. Thus, at the same time that the Khedive of Egypt had employed me to suppress the slave trade of the Nile, a Government expedition had been entrusted to the command of a well-known slave-hunter.

This was only one peculiarity in the policy of the Soudan authorities. The great outcry for money had caused an increase of taxa-

tion, which, as has been already shown, had caused the flight of large numbers of the population to the White Nile slave parties.

The Governor-General of the Soudan now bethought himself: "By what right do these people make fortunes in unknown lands beyond the Upper Nile?" It was easy to understand that they had no right. This was a golden opportunity for the Governor, who accordingly established a tax upon every trader to the White Nile, in the peculiar form of a lease. According to the position and importance of each trader, a lease was made out, by which the Government let to him for a certain term of years an undefined portion of Central Africa which did not belong to Egypt, and over which the Khedive had neither right nor authority. These leases enabled the traders, for the annual payment of several thousand pounds, to establish stations, and engage in their so-called trade in distant lands belonging to individual tribes, where no government was represented, and where an armed and organized Arab force would be able to commit any atrocity at discretion. There is no doubt that the actual wording of the lease was admirable, inculcating moral precepts, and warning adventurers against a participation in the slave trade; but if the Governor-General or any other authority should presume to declare himself ignorant that the real object of the enterprise was slave-hunting, he is simply stating that which is false.

SEASONABLE ADVICE.

FOR a thorough change, drop yourself where, instead of the monotonous bricks and mortar of London, you will find no bricks and but little mortar—houses built of huge blocks of granite, hewn into shape with a heavy pointed hammer; walls built of unhewn blocks, rough and jagged, but fitted one into the other; while from the interstices gush out little green rivulets of ivy, trickling down over the glittering mica; graceful ferns of a dozen varieties wave their green pennons, and starry pink stone-crops puts forth its modest flowers. Here into a rough granite trough a spring gushes from the rough granite bank, and short, well-knit women come to fill quaint red pitchers and—well, woman is woman the wide world over, and why not in Cornwall?—to gossip, for the pitchers run over many a time and

oft. And here, too, gracefully drooping over the plashing water, are ferns flourishing in such a rockery as raises feelings of covetousness, as one recalls the beggarly attempts we made in the back *chez nous* by the aid of the nurseryman and a cartload of clinkers from the brickfield; and then how the ferns would not grow, but became peppered with soot and drooped, probably languishing for their own native home! Granite everywhere—loads of it, brought in shallow, two-wheeled drays, fitted with a lever break, so steep are the hills in this rugged land. Granite, flashing its quartz crystals from blocks peering out of garden or field, where granite should not be—the hillside rugged with its ponderous masses; while where hedge and ditch should be are rugged granite walls, whose bareness nature has relieved with her luxuriant growths. In places where one of the thousand rills trickles down from rugged *carn* or *pen*, we have fern fronds large enough to turn one's thoughts to primeval days, ere the coal fields existed, and nature's growths were of so redundant a character.

Land of ferns, furze, and foxgloves, what a place for the fallow, toil-worn London artisan to come and inflate his lungs upon one of your wild, granite-coated moors, where the soft, grey gull floats lazily overhead, on its way to join the flock dipping far out in the calm bay—some riding upon the heaving breast of the sea, others busily catching fish from the shoal, whose presence they point out to the fishermen. But this is no fishing time, for the mackerel season is over, and the fleet of amber-sailed luggers is behind the large blocked pier, whose massive granite sides have hard work to bear the shocks of the mighty waves that come rolling in during a storm from the Atlantic.

The fishermen are at work, though; for this halt in the fishing is a busy time. Seams are being caulked and payed, the paint pots are out, fresh sails are being bent, and all made ready for the North Sea fishing, which shall take the men from home for months in chase of the silvery herring.

The mackerel nets are drying in graceful folds from yard and boom, over the cliff, or along the rocky beach, everywhere that a space can be found, before they are laid up in store; while the herring nets are being gone over, repaired, and taken on board,

dragged in over the roller at the boat's side, and stowed in the net locker.

Up here from the rocks of this *carn* you may see the whole bay, with its towns, harbours, and fishing villages—a lovely picture on a bright day. The sun and breeze will both attack you, so that you will return to your native smoke tanned, and with the skin perhaps peeling from your face. You shall taste salt—ay, and perhaps smell fishy—but there shall be a tenseness of nerve and muscle pervading your frame that shall have made you restless indoors, and given to wandering over hills, clambering massive rocks, and leaping chasms where the sea foams in, and fountains of rainbow-tinted spray dash over the limpet-studded rocks. You shall find something to suit your taste here, be it what it may, so long as fashion and her ways are left out. For you will meet with no promenaders, no carriage exercisers or languid swells in white kids arranging telescopes they do not use. All is real here, and this is the seaside in earnest. The waves do not curl over gently and ripple the sand, but come in with a hearty wash amongst the rocks, and stream back in bright cascades that have something earnest about them.

And now, what is your taste? Are you ethnological? Amuse yourself with the quaint, sturdy people, who dislike ritualism but intone every sentence of their secular speeches; look at their curious felt hats, as worn by the poorer class of women, who work like men sometimes. Look at their boats and fishing gear; at the curious squared basket, which fits across their back, and its broad inch band to support it from their forehead. Here you have a man at work with the long-handled spade of the place—a spade such as we see upon our packs of cards, long-handled and awkward-looking. But use is second nature, and this clumsy tool is made to answer a variety of purposes.

Do you love languages? Then trace out the remnants of the ancient British tongue that lingered longest here, and compare it with that of the mountainous parts of Wales, and Cumberland and Westmoreland. You will find here your *Carues*, and *Pens*, and *Gws* innumerable. You may visit St. Paul's Church, and see the stone erected to the memory of Dorothy Pentreath, said to be the last woman who conversed in the ancient Cornish tongue, now dead—though

Prince Lucien Bonaparte, who had the stone erected, does not tell us with whom she conversed.

Are you antiquarian? Roam over the hills and examine the Druidical remains; linger amidst the nineteen stones in circle in St. Buryan's, and dream of human sacrifice. Walk from village to village, and inspect the ancient carved crosses, and the fine old square-towered churches of the most solid of masonry.

Are you a botanist? Where could you find a greater variety of wild flowers, flowers of land and sea?—for every rock pool is a very garden full of submarine beauties. Geologist? You have the granite and trap rocks to study, the wondrous tiltings of the strata, the strange weatherings and denudations, the curious mineral veins running here and there, and cropping out in the most unexpected way. You may traverse the sea-shore, and find iron trickling out here in a ruddy stream, and copper there in the richest of pale greens. Now a broad, creamy white vein of spar wanders through the black basalt; now it is glittering metal, some sulphuret; while many a water-worn fragment, when broken, gives you tin, copper, or galena. Where is the country so rich in mineral treasures, where you may delve and blast out so large a list?—a list one almost hesitates to write—tin, copper, lead, manganese, antimony, iron, bismuth, nickel, arsenic, kaolin, steatite, asbestos, serpentine; but surely there are enough here to interest him who makes the earth his study?

Do you paint? Here are rugged and grand scenes by the sea-shore, in calm and storm; desolation in excelsis, where the waves are rampant; while for sweet landscapes no valleys can present prettier miniatures, with rock, rill, and wood, rural village and noble seat.

Legendary lore will offer you its anecdotes, and supply you with a rough history of the county.

You may row, or sail, or fish, wander inland or seaward, and if dyspeptic, find here such remedies as the feed physicians of all London could not supply.

A pleasant county, where the sea breeze tempers the winter into mildness, and softens the summer heat; but it has its drawbacks, and the man who seeks it for a change would act with folly did he leave behind his umbrella, for it knows how to rain here as well

as blow, though the keen east winds have their edge well blunted before they reach these far western shores. By all means bring your umbrella, which a careful friend advises should be strong, and during inland walks carried up, while a speaking-trumpet is beneath the left arm. For the country abounds in the unprotected shafts of disused mines, down one of which an unguarded step might take the tourist, when the umbrella from parapluie becomes parachute, lightly lowering the unfortunate to the bottom; where, upon reaching the pool of darkness that forms its floor—after the gentle splash has subsided—the umbrella may be reversed and form a support in the water, till the speaking-trumpet, with sonorous voice, has given warning of his whereabouts. But, whether or no, there is always good use for an umbrella as guard from sun or rain.

Ladies perchance may complain of the rugged coast and the want of smooth sands, while the steepness of the granite slopes may make them pant; but the panting hearts will rejoice at the Cornish stiles, some half-dozen parallel pieces of stone, with a few inches space between, all upon the same level, for cattle will not cross these little gaps.

But of the drawbacks again. The natives of the villages seem wanting in taste, and reserve all their cleanliness for the interior of their granite houses. Taste and clean streets are certainly at a discount here. Open drains, abounding in vegetable and fishy refuse, you see in abundance; but the flowers in pots, the neatly railed garden, with its vegetable plot, the trained creeper, and the rustic porch, are not to be seen; while in their place we have granite everywhere, built into walls strong enough for fortifications, pigsties fit to withstand a siege, and cow-houses massive as castles.

There is the change, though; and besides, the rosy maiden, Health, has here her home, racing red-cheeked over hill, through dale, and along the rock-strewn shore; while, light-hearted and merry, the flash of bright eye gets to be reflected in one's own; an elasticity pervades one's whole being; and treating the house only as a convenience for meals and sleep, one grows to be bashful in the landlady's eyes, ashamed of the length and soundness of the sleep, and the inordinate capacity of one's appetite. But then, it was for a change.

TABLE TALK.

THE Dog and Man Fight at Hanley has caused undoubtedly far more excitement than the writer ever anticipated. Most readers have seen the articles and the letters that have appeared in the daily and weekly press about "Brummy" and "Physic," the dwarf and dog. Mr. Greenwood says that the four-footed beast received the Physic (the name) from *his* hand, but he says nothing about the title "Brummy." Possibly that was only a nickname. Was his name Harris?

IT CANNOT BE disputed that a foot-passenger, though he may hurry across, has an equal right with the driver of a vehicle to that portion of the roadway which forms a continuation of the pavement set apart for the said foot-passenger's accommodation—a fact wherein he is favoured; for though he on foot has an equal right to the carriage-way, Jehu, on the contrary, trespasses if he only passes the kerbstone. But at the present time the idea seems prevalent that the passage of the carriage-way is the sole, indisputable right of the driver, and if he on foot crosses the end of a street, he is to be shouted at, even cursed, for his intrusion. Checking speed for an instant is never thought of by a driver, unless, perhaps, in times of great peril, and then too seldom, as our hospitals can show. Of the railway carriers' van-men it is useless to complain, since they all seem afflicted with a mania which incites them to believe that they are the governing powers of some huge battering ram, before which all must go down. Still, the cabman might be admonished; for as if it were not enough that he should afflict our sight with his rusty vehicle and spavined horse, our ears with the clattering of his windows, our sense of smell with the stabley odour of his cab lining, our nerves generally with the dread of infection, and our tenderest sympathies with his extortions, he must also use his best efforts to cut short our career, or, at least, send us maimed and broken to the hospital.

HOW MUCH LONGER is the "breach of confidence" dodge to last? Any one would think that the frequent exposés of the shallow trick would have long enough ago made it impossible in London. But no, here it is again, as reported in the police news a

few days since:—"The complainant, a young man, said he was a servant, and lived at Bolton's private hotel, St. Pancras. Yesterday afternoon he was looking at the Albert Memorial in Hyde Park, when Williams spoke to him and said it was nice. He said it was. They entered into conversation, and the prisoner asked him where he came from. He said from Bath. The prisoner said he came from Bristol last Friday, and talked about the place. They walked through Kensington Gardens, and had some beer and ginger-beer. At another public-house the other prisoner entered, and said he was a stranger in London; that he came up about a law suit, and had only two days to spare. He asked them to show him about. He talked about his money, and said he gave £5 to the parson's wife to buy a dress, and also to several farmers' wives. When they got into the Fulham-road, Eggle asked Williams if he would lend him £10 if he really wanted it. Williams said, 'Yes, and £30 or £50 if I had it.' Eggle then said, 'To try your honesty, let me have your purse. I will walk round and come back; you must not look which way I go.' Williams gave him his purse, in which he had previously shown what seemed a £5 note and some money. Williams and witness walked round. On their return the prisoner gave up the purse, and said he found Williams was a very honest man, and he would give him £5. He gave Williams what seemed to be a sovereign. The prisoner Eggle then asked witness if he would lend him £10 if he really wanted it. He said he would, and gave him two £5 notes in an envelope. The prisoner said, 'Don't look.' Witness turned his back, but he saw the prisoners go round a corner." The old, old story. And prisoners forgot to come back, but were captured and found to possess false coins and notes on the "Bank of Engraving," commonly known as flash. Somehow, we don't seem much wiser than our ancestors.

Communications to the Editor should be addressed to the Office, 19, Tavistock-street, Covent-garden, W.C.

Contributions should be legibly written, and only on one side of each leaf.

Every MS. should bear the Name and Address of the Sender.

Terms of Subscription to ONCE A WEEK, free by post:—Weekly Numbers for Six Months, 5s. 5d.; Monthly Parts, 5s. 8d.

ONCE A WEEK

NEW SERIES.

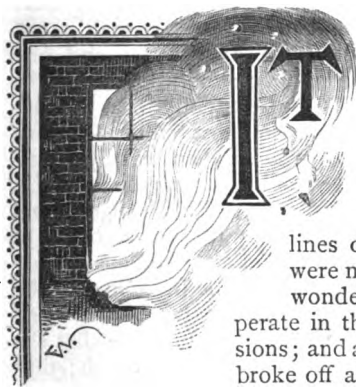
No. 345.

August 8, 1874.

Price 2d.

JACK'S SISTER; OR, WOMANLY PAST QUESTION.

CHAPTER XL.
LA RUE DES CAPUCINES.



IT WAS Jack who wrote the letter. Stern and conclusive as it was, the few

lines contained were nevertheless wonderfully temperate in their expressions; and although he broke off at once and for ever all communi-

cation between his cousin and the family under his own roof, there were no reproaches — neither taunt nor abuse — to weaken, while embittering, the sentence. The young Lycurgus at the Cedars knew better than to give his relative a handle by such intemperance; and even Enid, reading, could only look pitifully at her brother, feeling like a death-blow to her own heart the pitiless justice of that brief epistle, and yet unable to find cause for protesting against it. Jack would not have admitted protest.

"Sign your name here," he said, pointing to the postscript — "under this."

And when his sister begged, even with tears in her eyes, to be allowed to write one line, one word of personal forgiveness and farewell, he silenced her with prompt decision —

"Enid, you owned last night I was wiser than you in this matter; and I am. If you had never spoilt him as you did, he

would never have deceived and insulted you as he has. Were father alive, you know very well he would have been harsher than I. I am your only protector now he is gone; and as I've let this young scoundrel down easily for your sake, the least you can do is to obey me."

And Enid submitted. She had given up her own will into her brother's hands; and, as she said, she could do nothing more now. Did any one guess how deep the knife went which had cut away the ties of a whole lifetime at one slash? I think not. There was no bitterness in her manner, no harshness in her voice, no failing in the little home duties which made up so much of the daily comfort of those about her. Only that her sweet face had lost all trace of colour, that her step was slower, and that now and then, when no one was wanting her, the work would fall upon her knee, and the large eyes fill with slow, unbidden tears, you would hardly have thought she felt. And yet no one could have doubted it who had seen her face when she took the key from Merle's room, so that none might enter where he was forbidden; or watched her creep upstairs once a day to dust and arrange everything with the fastidious neatness which was one of his peculiar characteristics.

Jack was very kind to her for the first day or so; but whether her quietness deceived him, or that, acting up to his new motto that "all men were liars and all women unfaithful, and so it was better to find them out soon than late," he thought Enid not deserving of pity for losing one so unworthy of her, he quickly relapsed into the moody reserve which had tried her so deeply before, and which, being weaker now, was too much for her to bear with her former cheerfulness. On the third morning after Merle's sentence of exile, she startled her brother out of his brooding silence by saying, in rather a trembling voice —

"Jack, are you not going—going to Paris, or somewhere?"

"No—not now," he said, gruffly, and without looking up. "That scamp might get at you to annoy you; and, anyhow, I wouldn't go now. I don't care about it."

"But I do," she said, more earnestly. "Jack—do go, please. No one will come here. He does not care. He has not even written, you see—and you had made all arrangements for your holiday. Let me pack your portmanteau to-day—do."

"Do you want to get rid of me, then?" he said, looking up with some surprise into the pale, troubled face, and misty eyes. "I'll go, of course, if you do; but I shouldn't have thought it."

"Yes—I do;" and, though her lips shook, the voice sounded strange—almost, for her, sharp. "You are not happy here. You want change; and I—I suppose it is my fault; but I can't amuse you, or help you to forget. Perhaps if you go away a little, we shall both be happier and better. At any rate, try it, Jack, do. I—I don't think I am very strong at present, and it makes me cross and selfish. I shall be better alone."

She was evidently in earnest; and Jack went. He was huffed at first; but I think at the end the contrast between their two ways of bearing trouble struck the young man; or perhaps it was the sense that they stood alone in the world save for one another, and that his harsh moroseness had helped to lay a heavier burden on the patient shoulders, which had borne so much without complaint or murmur. Anyhow, he put his arms round her very tenderly at going away, and bade her take care of herself, adding—

"You're better than I am, Enid, and I've left you to take all the worst rubs, poor old girl! I'll do better when I come back, God willing; and, meanwhile, don't be hard on me; for, bear as I am, you're the one girl I think worth love or belief in the world."

It was evening when Jack reached Paris—a dull, wet evening after a dull, wet day; and he felt half inclined to turn back and go home again. The long, uninteresting journey; the mouthful of salt air, and glimpse of grey rough surf at Boulogne; the petite verre of cognac and scalding plate of potage aux herbes at Amiens; the brief glimpses of grey-looking, fortified towns, and long sweeps of flat, monotonous country; the shrill-voiced

little soldiers, with wasp-like waists and balloon-like trousers; the brown-legged, black-eyed female porters; the gabble and clatter, the abundance of gesture and hailstorm of ejaculation, all passed by him like an unpleasant dream, only recalling by contrast the last merry journey a year ago. He was glad when at last it came to an end; and having called a fiacre, he found himself rolling over the asphalt to a hotel—not the gay and glittering one which he and Clif had patronized on their last visit, but a more modest establishment in the Rue des Capucines, where his father had put up once in olden times.

There did not seem many people at it now. It was the dead season in Paris, and nearly every one was away. At the table d'hôte, where Jack took his dinner, there were only two or three solitary males scattered over the large apartment; and one family, father, mother, and little girl, of the bourgeois class, and evidently from the provinces, who were on most amicable terms with the waiter, a more than usually loquacious specimen of a loquacious class. Jack, eating his own dinner in British dignity and silence, was amused by the naïve chatter at the opposite table, and at the frequent interruptions occasioned by the behaviour of the little girl, who persisted in turning her head to look at himself at the same time that she raised a spoonful of soup to her mouth; thus invariably missing that receptacle, and sending a stream of warm, brown liquid down the well-starched bosom of her frilled white muslin pinafore.

"Mais de grâce! Euphrosyne," the mother would exclaim, with a little scream, and a tilt of her whole person across the table in the direction of her small offspring. "Prends garde donc, p'tite méchante. N'est ce pas qu'on n'a jamais vu une p'tite demoiselle si mal élevée, p'tit papa?"

And then, as Euphrosyne faced about right front, she turned again to the waiter, and went on with what they were saying about an English family upstairs, for whose use the little table in the corner was reserved—

"And was the lady really so beautiful?"

"Belle! belle à merveille," the waiter cried, raising hands and shoulders as though the force of admiration were lifting him bodily to the ceiling. "Une petite ange pour regarder, et"—with a ludicrous change of voice—"et, foi d'un homme, une petite diablesse pour toute autre chose."

The bourgeoisie held up her hands also.

"And English?" she said.

"And English," replied the waiter. "Figure to yourself, madame, that I have been three years in that country of tristesse and mal humeur, and never have seen one lady like this. That is to say, see you, of her youth and station. In the Bocage de Saint Jean in London there are of them, but of another class. She buys—there is nothing she fancies that she does not buy; though her husband, *pauvre garçon!* says often—'Bébé, my cherished, remember yourself that we are not as the rich ones—that it is necessary I work to pay all this.' She mocks at the 'convenances,' makes the promenade all alone, and offers him of reproaches and injuries at each moment."

"Mais, ventre du diable!" put in bourgeois père, with a vehement wave of the knife which had been hitherto employed in assisting refractory pieces of bouillon down his throat—"is the husband an idiot, a guinea fowl 'qu'on tire le nez,' after that mode there?"

"The husband is an angel," said the waiter, solemnly. "He has the patience of le bon Dieu, and the face of—but Madame should see it, *c'est à ravir!* Never have I heard him say one word of anger or accusation, not even when Madame, who has les migraines, takes too much of le cognac for to sleep, understand you. It is a pity that a young man so amiable should have espoused this petite ennuyeuse, as, alas! it is impossible to put her away like les filles gaies. The young Englishmen, when they are virtuous, are fools. For me, I intend not ever to marry with a girl. On ne se range jamais jusqu'à les quatorze ans."

Jack felt inclined to encore this opinion, which was delivered with none the less dignity that the waiter was a little, lame, shrivelled-up creature of seventy or thereabouts. He found himself pitying this unfortunate young husband, encumbered with an evil-tempered, fast, and extravagant wife.

"Rather he than I, poor devil!" he muttered, self-complacently; and having finished his dinner, and the evening showing signs of clearing, he took his hat, and sallied forth for a stroll along the Boulevards. It was about ten o'clock when he returned to the hotel, and the rain was again coming down fast. As he went upstairs to his own room, sounds of altercation on the floor above caught his ear, and made him stop

short; for the words were English, and there was a strange, familiar sound in the voices. Another moment, and they came nearer, and a woman's, young but loud and sharp with anger, cried out—

"Oh, of course you go out to get rid of me. You won't let me have a grain of amusement; but you take care to get plenty yourself."

"I certainly will not take you to Mabilie, Baby, or let you go with those Simons," answered the other voice—very quiet, but oh, heavens, what a homelike sound it had!—"because neither the place nor the people are proper for you. And I am only going out now to walk about for half an hour or so, for the simple reason that you make the house too miserable for a man to stay in—"

He was interrupted, for the girl above burst out into an angry, taunting laugh—

"A walk! Oh, very likely! As if I were really a baby to believe that. Of course you hate the sight of me. I believe you always did; though you pretended not to at that hateful country town. Hypocrite! And you go out to amuse yourself and leave me here. No, I won't be quiet. It's you who are making a scandal, not me; and I don't care who hears. Papa shall—I can tell you that. See if I don't write to him to-morrow."

And here a door upstairs was shut with a bang which resounded along the gallery, a man's step came hurrying downstairs, and a young man came out into the light, and, in his haste, nearly tumbled over Jack, who was coming upstairs leisurely.

It was Clifton Gore.

The surprise was far greater for him than for Jack; so great, indeed, that it overswept all thought of everything but the unlooked-for presence of his boyhood's friend; and with a glow of pleasure lighting up all his pale, handsome face—with an exclamation of glad, cordial greeting—he sprang forward, both hands outstretched to his friend's.

Jack looked at him—looked at him with cold, stern contempt from head to foot, drove his own hands into his pockets, and passed him by without word or sign of recognition.

If ever man received the "cut direct," that man was Clifton Gore. Will the most partial of his admirers dare to say that he was not deserving of it?

And yet even Jack, filled with his righteous anger, might have compassionated the grey look of pained remembrance which swept over that face, "*beau à ravir*," as the outstretched hands fell back at his side, and the young man went on his way, humiliated and abashed. It was not the beginning of his Nemesis.

Jack had gone into his own room hot with bitter wrath at the sight of the man who had betrayed him. He was half inclined to leave the hotel that night, and seek another lodging, rather than breathe the same air with those whom he had vowed never to forgive. Second thoughts, however, prevailed. His pride told him that it was for traitors to shun him, not he them; and that to hurry away in the rain and darkness would be an undignified proceeding for a man who had no cause to dread the face of any living being. Instead, he undressed as quick as he could, and went to bed. It was ridiculously early; but he was tired with the long journey, and anxious to escape the remembrance of that bright, brave face, with the new look of care on it. Besides, he had pitied that nameless husband in the waiter's story, and now he wanted to forget him. Fatigue favoured his desire. Before half an hour had elapsed, Jack was as sound as a church.

It must have been past midnight when he woke, startled into a sitting posture by a strong smell of burning, and a perfect chorus of cries from the floor above; and in half a second he had struggled into his boots and trousers, and added one to the confused heap of waiters, servant girls, proprietors, and guests streaming up the stairs in every imaginable form of disarray. One of the rooms *au troisième* was on fire. Smoke even then was curling through the closed door, and yet the inmate within could not be awakened.

Three or four people were already struggling at the door, which was bolted from within; and as Jack forced his way upstairs, a chorus of exclamations smote upon his ears—

"It is the lady."

"The charming little Englishwoman."

"She is asleep."

"Dead!"

"Where is her husband?"

"With her."

"Not with her."

"The fire is in the dressing-room within."

"Dieu! Will the door never open!"

"Is there no other?"

"*Sacré nom du diable!* where are the fire engines?"

And so on, and so on.

The tumult was at its highest, and Jack had just thrust a group of screaming women aside, and got his shoulder against the door, when a young man, fair-haired and ghastly pale, tore upstairs, scattering the people to right and left like a whirlwind, and flung himself against the panel, with teeth set and flashing eyes.

"Shoulders together, Jack!" he cried, hoarsely. "It's for her life!"

And even with the words the door shook, cracked, and gave way, actually torn from its hinges, and crashing back upon the floor within, borne down by the gigantic strength of the two young men. The next moment they had passed it, and disappeared into the thick, grey smoke filling the room, and pouring out, now the door was down, in so dense and stifling a volume upon the gallery and staircases as to drive back the eager women and children shrieking to the hall below.

"*Mort de Dieu!*" cried the old waiter. "Why do not the engines arrive?"

And from the smoke within, lit by lurid flashes from the cornice and cracks of the dressing-room door, came a double cry of despair—

"*Locked also!*"

At that moment the rumble of the engines was heard in the streets below.

"Now!" cried Jack.

Brave as he was, he had staggered back at first, choked and almost suffocated by the stifling smoke, which had an overpowering effect on a man of his flesh and short throat. Clif met his hand, and wrung it tight, pushing him back at the same time, as he cried—

"Keep away. I can do it myself. Why should you risk your life?"

"Don't be a fool, old chap—I'm stronger than you," was the half-smothered answer, as his friend pressed back to his side.

But Clif was quicker this time, or the door less strong. It gave way at the first blow; and the young man, spent with smoke and exertion, fell with it, going down, head foremost, into the red sea of flame within, which rushed out like some fiery monster rabid for further prey, stretching out its fierce, snake-like arms, and driving even the

boldest before it. The entire room was in a blaze.

And now the fire engines began to play; and the dressing-room window was broken by a stream of water deluging the furnace within; and a queue was formed upon the stairs, and buckets brimming with water passed along to cast upon the outer room; and the crowd in the hall and street below, and the volumes of smoke above, grew denser and blacker with every second.

Some one had dragged Jack out upon the landing. For a minute or less he seemed stupid with suffocation. The next he had sprung to his feet with the energy of a lion awakening, and gasped out the one word—

"Clif!"

A dozen voices answered him.

"Le mari?"

"Eh, mon Dieu!"

"Le pauvre garçon!"

"Tombé."

"Disparu."

"Où est il donc?"

"Aïe! Sacré! Là dedans."

With one wave of his huge hand, Jack swept them aside.

"And you left him *there!*" was all he said.

But the big gendarme guarding the outer door with his bucket never forgot that giant arm, which flung him against the opposite wall like a beetle, nor the great, dark figure dashing past him into the lurid darkness of smoke and flame, and hissing streams of water.

It reappeared a minute later, black from head to foot, and half carrying, half dragging a lifeless, helpless body, the golden hair burnt to the head, the limp, dangling hands scorched and bleeding.

"Throw water over him, you idiots!" Jack cried.

And then he knelt down beside the insensible form, tearing off the charred and smouldering clothes, and calling to his friend by all the old boyish terms to come back again to life and him.

Long before awakening animation gave him even time to look around, the fire engine had got the flames under sufficiently for people to enter the inner room. The cry of horror and dead silence that followed startled him. He set his teeth hard; but not all his manhood could repress a fierce, sickening shudder as the people on the stairs parted to make room for two firemen

carrying something black and charred, and covered with a coat, between them.

"Smothered in her sleep," some one said, "and dead before the flames could touch her. She never uttered one cry."

"Thank God for it!" Jack muttered, as he hid his face within his trembling hands.

It was her own doing. With the spiteful desire of mortifying her husband, she had locked and bolted him out before going to rest, and had fallen asleep reading in bed. The candle had caught the light window curtains, and travelled to the heavier damask ones of the bed; and owing to the double fact of closed inside venetians, and the hotel being so empty that there was no one else on that landing, the flames were not discovered till the whole room was on fire, and the smoke and smell had penetrated to the passage without.

It was a comfort to think that she had not suffered at all; that the pretty face which had done so much mischief was laid in the grave smooth and uninjured, with only a half fretful pout upon the rosy, childish lips.

Two mourners stood beside the grave in Père la Chaise—her husband, his face still haggard and scarred from the fire, one arm in a sling, and his whole person showing signs of illness and suffering; and the big man on whose strong arm he leant, and who, as soon as the service was over, hurried him into a close carriage and home to the hotel—another one—where they were lodging, and where for the last week he had been doing duty as head nurse and comforter, with more patience and tenderness than many a woman, though without wasting quite as many words over it as some.

"God bless you, Jack!" Clifton said, sadly, as his friend mixed a glass of brandy and water and brought it to him. "I'm not worth so much care, least of all from you. Why don't you leave me, and go after your own business?"

"Because I don't choose," said Jack, gruffly; "so just shut up. I never saw such a boy for jaw. Catch me letting you out of my sight again, that's all!"

THE FRENCH AT HOME.

BY AN OLD TRAVELLER.

WOMAN has been defined a weaker man; but in this country the men are, in my opinion, more ridiculous and insignificant than the women. They certainly

are more disagreeable to a rational inquirer, because they are more troublesome. Of all the coxcombs on the face of the earth, a French *petit maître* is the most impertinent: and they are all *petits maîtres*, from the marquis who glitters in lace and embroidery to the *garçon barbier* covered with meal, who struts with his hair in a long queue, and his hat under his arm. I have already observed that vanity is the great and universal mover among all ranks and degrees of people in this nation; and, as they take no pains to conceal or control it, they are hurried by it into the most ridiculous and, indeed, intolerable extravagances.

When I talk of the French nation, I must again except a great number of individuals from the general censure. Though I have a hearty contempt for the ignorance, folly, and presumption which characterize the generality, I cannot but respect the talents of many great men, who have eminently distinguished themselves in every art and science; these I shall always revere and esteem, as creatures of a superior species, produced for the wise purposes of Providence among the refuse of mankind. It would be absurd to conclude that the Welsh or Highlanders are a gigantic people because those mountains may have produced a few individuals near seven feet high. It would be equally absurd to suppose the French people are a nation of philosophers because France has given birth to a Des Cartes, a Maupertuis, a Reaumur, and a Buffon.

I shall not even deny that the French are by no means deficient in natural capacity; but they are, at the same time, remarkable for a natural levity, which hinders their youth from cultivating that capacity. This is reinforced by the most preposterous education, and the example of a giddy people, engaged in the most frivolous pursuits. A Frenchman is, by some Jesuit or other monk, taught to read his mother tongue, and to say his prayers in a language he does not understand. He learns to dance and to fence by the masters of those most noble sciences. He becomes a complete connoisseur in dressing hair, and in adorning his own person, under the hands and instructions of his barber and valet de chambre. If he learns to play upon the flute or the fiddle, he is altogether irresistible. But he piques himself upon being polished above the natives of any other country by his con-

versation with the fair sex. In the course of this communication, with which he is indulged from his tender years, he learns, like a parrot, by rote, the whole circle of French compliments, which you know are a set of phrases ridiculous even to a proverb; and these he throws out indiscriminately to all women, without distinction, in the exercise of that kind of address which is here distinguished by the name of gallantry: it is no more than his making love to every woman who will give him the hearing. It is an exercise by the repetition of which he becomes very pert, very familiar, and very impertinent. Modesty, or diffidence, I have already said, is utterly unknown among them, and therefore I wonder there should be a term to express it in their language.

If I were obliged to define politeness, I should call it the art of making one's self agreeable. I think it an art that necessarily implies a sense of decorum, and a delicacy of sentiment. These are qualities of which (as far as I have been able to observe) a Frenchman has no idea; therefore he never can be deemed polite, except by those persons among whom they are as little understood.

His first aim is to adorn his own person with what he calls fine clothes; that is, the frippery of the fashion. It is no wonder that the heart of a female, unimproved by reason, and untinctured with natural good sense, should flutter at the sight of such a gaudy thing among the number of her admirers. This impression is enforced by fustian compliments, which her own vanity interprets in a literal sense, and still more confirmed by the assiduous attention of the gallant, who, indeed, has nothing else to mind. A Frenchman, in consequence of his mingling with females from his infancy, not only becomes acquainted with all their customs and humours, but grows wonderfully alert in performing a thousand little offices which are overlooked by other men, whose time has been spent in making more valuable acquisitions.

If he visits a lady, and perceives the least impropriety in her coiffure, he insists upon adjusting it with his own hands; if he sees a curl, or even a single hair amiss, he produces his comb, his scissors, and pomatum, and sets it to rights with the dexterity of a professed friseur. He squires her to every place she visits, either on business or pleasure, and by dedicating his whole time to her ren-

ders himself necessary to her occasions. This I take to be the most agreeable side of his character. Let us view him on the quarter of impertinence. A Frenchman pries into all your secrets with the most impudent and importunate curiosity, and then discloses them without remorse. If you are indisposed, he questions you about the symptoms of your disorder with more freedom than your physician would presume to use. He then proposes his remedy (for they are all quacks); he prepares it without your knowledge, and worries you with solicitations to take it, without paying the least regard to the opinion of those whom you have chosen to take care of your health. Let you be ever so ill or averse to company, he forces himself at all times into your presence; and if it is necessary to give him a peremptory refusal, he is affronted. I have known one of these *petits maitres* insist upon paying regular visits, twice a day, to a poor gentleman who was delirious; and he conversed with him on different subjects till he was in his last agonies. This attendance is not the effect of attachment or regard, but of sheer vanity, that he may boast of his charity and humane disposition; though of all the people I have ever known, I think the French are the least capable of feeling for the distresses of their fellow-creatures. Their hearts are not susceptible of deep impressions, and such is their levity that their imagination has not time to brood long over any disagreeable idea or sensation.

If a Frenchman is capable of real friendship, it must certainly be the most disagreeable present he can possibly make to a man of a true English character. You know, madam, we are naturally taciturn, soon tired of impertinence, and much subject to fits of disgust. Your French friend intrudes upon you at all hours; he stuns you with his loquacity; he teases you with impertinent questions about your domestic and private affairs; he attempts to meddle in all your concerns; and forces his advice upon you with the most unwearied importunity. He asks the price of everything you wear, and, so sure as you tell him, undervalues it, without hesitation; he affirms it is in bad taste, ill-contrived, ill-made; that you have been imposed upon both with respect to the fashion and the price; that the *marquise* of this, or the *countess* of that, has one that is perfectly elegant, quite in the *bon ton*, and yet it cost her little more than

you gave for a thing that nobody would wear.

If there were five hundred dishes at table, a Frenchman would eat of all of them, and then complain he has no appetite. This I have several times remarked. A friend of mine gained a considerable wager upon an experiment of this kind: the *petit maitre* ate of fourteen different plats, besides the dessert; then disparaged the cook, declaring he was no better than a *marmiton* or *turnspit*.

The French have a most ridiculous fondness for their hair, and this I believe they inherit from their remote ancestors. The first race of French kings were distinguished by their long hair, and certainly the people of this country consider it as an indispensable ornament. A Frenchman will sooner part with his religion than with his hair, which, indeed, no consideration will induce him to forego. I know a gentleman afflicted with a continual headache, and a defluxion on his eyes, who was told by his physician that the best chance he had for being cured would be to have his head close shaved, and bathed every day in cold water.

"How!" cried he, "cut my hair? Mr. Doctor, your most humble servant!"

He dismissed his physician, lost his eyesight, and almost his senses, and is now led about with his hair in a bag, and a piece of green silk hanging like a screen before his face.

Count Saxe, and other military writers, have demonstrated the absurdity of a soldier's wearing a long head of hair; nevertheless, every soldier in this country wears a long queue, which makes a delicate mark on his white clothing; and this ridiculous foppery has descended even to the lowest class of people. The *décrotteur*, who cleans your shoes at the corner of the Pont Neuf, has a tail of this kind hanging down his back. This is the ornament upon which he bestows much time and pains, and in the exhibition of which he finds full gratification for his vanity.

A French friend tires out your patience with long visits; and, far from taking the most palpable hints to withdraw, when he perceives you uneasy, he observes you are low-spirited, and therefore declares he will keep you company. This perseverance shows that he must either be void of all penetration, or that this, his disposition, must be truly diabolical. Rather than be tormented with such a fiend, a man had

better turn him out of doors, even though at the hazard of being run through the body.

The French are generally counted insincere, and taxed with want of generosity; but I think these reproaches are not well founded. High-flown professions of friendship and attachment constitute the language of common compliment in this country, and are never supposed to be understood in the literal acceptance of the words; and if their acts of generosity are but very rare, we ought to ascribe that rarity, not so much to a deficiency of generous sentiments as to their vanity and ostentation, which, engrossing all their funds, utterly disable them from exerting the virtues of beneficence. Vanity, indeed, predominates among all ranks to such a degree that they are the greatest egotists in the world; and the most insignificant individual talks in company with the same conceit and arrogance as a person of the greatest importance. Neither conscious poverty nor disgrace will restrain him in the least, either from assuming his full share of the conversation, or making his addresses to the finest lady whom he has the smallest opportunity to approach; nor is he restrained by any other consideration whatsoever. It is all one to him whether he himself has a wife of his own, or the lady a husband; whether she is designed for the cloister, or pre-engaged to his best friend and benefactor—he takes it for granted that his addresses cannot but be acceptable; and if he meets with a repulse, he condemns her taste, but never doubts his own qualifications.

AT THE NORTH POLE.

IN TWO CHAPTERS.—II.

"IF all is as you state," I said, after hearing Willoughby's lengthy narrative, "there is little difficulty in deciding—most assuredly I will be one of you. It may be true, as you say, that people become tired of long life, even although they possess full powers and vigour; but at present I cannot understand such a feeling, and incline most decidedly to live as long as I can, and see as much of the old world and its doings as possible. You have put the matter before me in so clear a manner, and with such circumstance and lucidity, that I really am not so much inclined to think the whole thing a crazy fancy as I was at first. I

speak plainly—I did think you 'cracked' for the first quarter of an hour after you had begun your narrative; but now I believe there is something in it. You must allow, it is rather startling to be told that you are among people several hundreds of years old. Now, however, I can understand the real meaning of an old saying, which in itself proves some traditionary acquaintance with the long life of your people, I mean the old saying—'As old as Poles.' This evidently has arisen from the marvellous ages attained by the Poles; by which, I conclude, you must be meant, and not the inhabitants of Russian Poland. May I ask whether you have among you many Northern explorers whom we suppose to have been lost?"

"You will see many," he replied; "but I will leave you to make their acquaintance, and discover who they are from personal knowledge. If you have friends among them, it is likely you will meet them again; and they will make you feel more at home amongst us."

I will now proceed to describe our voyage. We kept strictly to the warmest part of the Gulf Stream, and met with little interruption from ice. This, however, I was informed, was an exceptionally good season. Soon after passing the northern coast of Nova Zembla we quitted the last ice, and entered on the open sea, still following the Gulf Stream. The next land we sighted was a barren rock, situated in lat. $83^{\circ} 27'$ and lon. E. $98^{\circ} 10'$. It was not more than two miles in length along the side we passed, but from it rises a sharp peak to the height of 12,300 feet. This island they have named the Beacon, as it serves as a landmark to guide them to the entrance of the great river spoken of by Willoughby, which is the key to the whole country. Why it runs inland, instead of to the sea, will be explained when I come to describe the formation of the land.

I should have taken this river to be an arm of the sea, as, sailing near one shore, the other was hidden from us by a horizon of water. The coast was somewhat bold; and the mountains, although not very high, were capped with snow. The lower slopes were, however, covered with pine trees, and the whole appearance of the country reminded me of Switzerland. We sailed—or rather, floated with the stream—for two days up this river, which still maintained its full breadth, when we came to a large town,

where we anchored. Here I made my first acquaintance with the inhabitants.

Had I not known that I was in a country possessing exceptional characteristics, I should, at first sight, certainly have observed nothing to induce me to think that I was in an out-of-the-way part of the world. There appeared to be a mixture of different national features and languages. The houses were what we English should call "foreign" in construction and appearance. The people were all hale and hearty, and never needed a doctor, except in case of accident. There was a church with a small spire; and the town had a comfortable, quiet, well-to-do, family look about it, which was quite charming.

The principal difference between the people and those of southern regions was their want of colour. Even the young children were pale. This is naturally accounted for, the absence of the light of the sun during half the year producing this lack of colour. However, the children all looked fat and flourishing, and went to their schools and their play as we do in our old countries. I met some English here, and one of the old Danish priests who had gone to the colony in Greenland some centuries ago. After staying here a week, we proceeded some days' sail farther inland, and came to a large lake or sea, on the shore of which is situated the principal city. This city covers a large space of ground—probably about as much as is included within the walls of Paris; but the houses are not built closely together, and, of course, the population is very much smaller. Here I found an old friend and schoolfellow, whom I had mourned as dead fifteen years ago. I also met many whose names are known to fame, but they begged me not to mention their existence should I return to Europe, as it is the law of the country to hold no communication with those away from it, except in certain cases, and under peculiar circumstances. Any who wish to return to their families can do so, and may come back and re-enter their Polar home. Few, however, avail themselves of this liberty, as they would find it impossible to account for their existence without rendering themselves liable to incarceration as madmen, as before explained by Willoughby in his narrative. Vessels proceed every year, or nearly so—for sometimes a period of some years elapses between the vessels, from severe seasons rendering the ice im-

passable—to Archangel, Drontheim, and other ports, where dépôts are made of goods, books, newspapers, &c., &c., which are brought home to the community. Any one wishing to return to the Pole country has only to meet one of these vessels; but he must be known to the captain, or he will not be received on board. The books and newspapers are circulated generally among all, and thus a fair knowledge is kept up of what is going on in the world. And, in fact, from seeing that preparations were making for Arctic expeditions, they have known to what part of the Polar continent to direct their searches for lost explorers, and thus have saved many lives that otherwise would have been lost.

During my stay here I was taken many expeditions, and viewed all the singular phenomena existing in that region. The result of my investigations will be best put into the form of a slight sketch of the formation of the country, in all its physical peculiarities.

It is a large continental island, of irregular shape, its longest axis extending nearly along a line from the northernmost point of Spitzbergen towards Point Barrow on the coast of North America. It possesses an extended seaboard towards Nova Zembla and Asiatic Russia, and it is in this part of the coast that the large river already mentioned enters the land. There are several other rivers entering at different points, all falling into the central lake; but none of them so large or so easy of access as that on which we sailed up into the interior. All these rivers render warm and fertile various large valleys, and in these are situated the towns and residences of the people. That part of the Gulf Stream which does not enter these rivers is small; it runs along the coast, and ultimately escapes back into the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans by way of Baffin's Bay and Davis's Straits, through which, in consequence, there is a constant southern set of current. The coldest portion of the country is that opposite North America, as the sea in that part lies in a sort of "backwater" between the two tails of the Gulf Stream; and this part is frequently connected by ice with Melville Island, Greenland, and the parts adjacent. It is over this ice bridge that many men have escaped from the certain death which appeared to await them, and found refuge in this country.

But I have yet to mention—description is impossible—the most stupendous phenomenon in the physical formation of this wonderful land. Nothing in any other part of the world can equal its grandeur and immensity. The water collected in the inland sea flows out of it in one deep, broad sheet of water; and after winding through fertile valleys for about fifty miles, it falls over a precipice of at least one thousand feet in height; here it strikes on a ledge, and again descends a vast chasm, into an unfathomable abyss, disappearing entirely from sight in clouds of rolling vapour. Niagara is a little rill to it. It is impossible to conceive anything so awfully grand as this sea engulfing itself in the earth. The stupendous hollow which receives it is full of mist, and only now and then gigantic spouts of water are thrown high up in the air, as it is by volcanic force. I was told that this opening is situated exactly at the North Pole; and it is the theory of those who have considered the question that this water enters there and proceeds through the interior of the earth, where it becomes heated, and finds a vent in the Gulf of Mexico, whence it proceeds on its way back as the Gulf Stream, thus being another instance of that law of circulation which is found so generally to prevail in physical phenomena. There are doubtless other orifices through which water enters the interior of the earth, and its presence is considered by some philosophers to be the cause of earthquakes and volcanic eruptions, from the recently discovered property which water possesses of exploding when in contact with substances at a red heat, though retaining its liquid form unaltered by white heat. Taking this view of the question, and also supposing that at the South Pole there is an opening similar to that at the North Pole, it is certain that all that is necessary for the destruction of the world would be its ceasing to rotate on its axis. Centrifugal force having then been destroyed, and the earth being flattened at the Poles, the sea, naturally endeavouring to find its level as governed by the attraction of gravitation, would rush from the equatorial regions, and flow over into these great openings, penetrate to the hot regions of the globe, and, as soon as they were cooled down to a certain point, the water would explode the whole mass, as a shell is burst by its charge. These are, of course, mere theories, but are interesting subjects of conjecture,

as being within the possible events of the future.

About one hundred miles to the south of this Pole, in the direction of Davis's Straits, is another great feature of the country. It is a wide volcanic region, with an immense number of craters, more or less in a state of constant activity. At certain periods of the year, and in certain states of the atmosphere, the mist or vapour rises high from the great fall, and floats over these volcanoes. These vapours are of extreme tenuity, and rise very high in the air. On them plays the light from the intermitting flashes of volcanic fire, and these lights are those which we occasionally see and know by the name of aurora borealis, or northern lights. The whole country is volcanic, and many hot springs are found in various parts. These are of great use in heating the houses, the water being conveyed in pipes for that purpose, exactly in the same way that we treat our hothouses and conservatories. With regard to the heat which this country obtains from the sun, the length of its visit renders the accumulated power very great. It also shines on all sides with equal power, a benefit which is not possessed by other lands. During the summer, therefore, vegetation is very rapid, and crops abundant. Animal life is plentiful. Ducks and sea birds abound, and of fish there is great variety. There is consequently no lack of food.

To some of the lichens, and to certain mineral springs, are attributed the reconstructive power which acts on the human body, and continues it in health, youth, and strength. These things are, of course, entirely peculiar to this country, and known in no other part of the world.

During the long winter, time never hung heavily on our hands. Light and warmth were everywhere in the dwellings; and it was never uncomfortably dark at any time out of doors. The light from the volcanic region, also, always gave a warm tinge to the atmosphere. Altogether, I enjoyed my sojourn there extremely—not the less that I lost my heart to a golden-haired fairy, a daughter of Willoughby, now about twenty years of age, and whom I hope on my return to make my wife. I will then, if she ventures on the expedition, bring her for a tour through the old, and to her unknown, world. She may thus see for herself, and choose whether we settle there and die, or return to her native home and live.

About the middle of May, I again went on board Willoughby's ship, and, after a prosperous voyage, was landed at Aberdeen, where I am to rejoin him next summer for another visit to these Polar lands. By that time I shall have made all necessary arrangements for my marriage, and for a prolonged foreign tour.

Should I in the future spend much time in this Polar country, it is my intention to investigate all its wonders, map it thoroughly, and give its history and that of its inhabitants, as far as may be obtained. The existence of such a land gives great reason for thought. Here might have been the real Paradise, or Garden of Eden. Adam and Eve, when placed on earth, were certainly of full and mature growth, and would have continued in the same physical state of perfection, had not death come into the world. From the universal way in which the Creator works through apparently natural means, we may be sure that the primeval mode of living was one natural to the place in which the first of mankind were placed; that all was given them necessary to support and keep in undying strength the body and powers created in them. Here, then, in this Polar land alone, of all the known lands of earth, are present all the elements which produce this permanence of power. It is, therefore, a fair inference that it is, at any rate, extremely probable that this land was the real Garden of Eden. A glance at the projection of the northern hemisphere of the earth will show that the North Pole is the centre of the land. Therefore was it most suited for the birthplace of mankind. From it would branches easily radiate into the different continents, here all near at hand; although in the equatorial regions far beyond ancient power to reach. By this theory we do away with many difficulties respecting the origin of species. At that period this country was doubtless not what it now is.

We have abundant evidence that climates have changed during the existence of the world; and we imagine that at the "fall of man" this land became shut up in icy fetters, and that the angel with the flaming sword, who drove Adam and Eve out, and prevented their re-entering the garden, may easily be translated into bright, light-reflecting ice, constantly forming in its sword-like crystals, and driving them over a frozen way thus made for them on to the continents of the south. Once

there, they would proceed towards the warmer parts of the earth, believing that they were regaining Eden; and so at last settle in the central regions. The remains of the essence of life in their system, which was carried by them into other lands, still continued to produce an effect, not as in its pristine condition—it prolonged life, but could not conquer death. We see that for many centuries the descendants of our first parents lived long lives; and, as this powerful elixir of life became exhausted by time and division amongst numerous progeny, lives became gradually shorter.

At some future time I shall hope to give more time to the investigation of these matters. At present I shall conclude these rough notes of a visit to a land lying in the midst of the open Polar Sea.

C. H. W.

GOING FOR A SOLDIER.

WHAT was it? I cannot answer the question myself. The thoughts of glory; the tinsel, and glitter, and finery; the martial music, the apparently free and reckless life? I do not know. Perhaps a tinge of all these, and a mingling of the love of adventure, which made me, with a companion, leave home clandestinely to be a soldier.

Without a thought of the past, but with everything centred in the future, we reached London upon a cold, dark winter's night, two raw boys of seventeen, with not much cash in our pockets, but determination in our breasts, as, after a long search, we came upon a coffee-house in Berwick-street, Soho—that pleasant region—guided to the spot by a dingy lamp having the legend "Beds."

Past eleven o'clock as, wet-footed and weary, we entered a box; and—after hearing that we could have a bed for two shillings—for the benefit of the house, and to look large, we called for two cups of coffee, which were served to us at length—very brown, very grouty, and apparently sweetened with treacle. My companion drank his, but I could not; and after emptying a portion into his cup and saucer and spilling a portion in my own, for fear the keeper of the place should fancy I wished to insult him, I pushed my repast from me in disgust.

A very dirty tin candlestick, spotted like a leopard skin with brown-hued grease drops,

being given to us, our host, very red-eyed and yawny, led us up interminable stairs to the very top of the house, where there were two stump bedsteads in the dirty attic; and then, warning us not to lock the door because another gentleman was coming there to sleep, he left us.

Some lads perhaps are very manly and large at seventeen, but I must confess that I was not; and if I had been alone, the first thing I should have done would have been to indulge in a good hearty cry, while a subsequent confession told me that my companion felt similarly disposed. However, no tears fell; and after carefully securing our money and the watch one of us had in a handkerchief-formed belt, we betook ourselves to the dirty bed pointed out as for our use, and tried to sleep.

I felt that sleep was out of the question, and lay listening to the rumbling vehicles in the next street for some time; when having, as I thought, closed my eyes for a moment, upon opening them, instead of the faint gas-light dancing upon the yellow blind, the room was illumined by a candle placed upon the rickety three-legged washstand—a dirty, broken candle which hung on one side, and dropped grease into the candlestick in little pats, which formed an ever-growing stalagmite upon the worn tin. The next glance showed me that a man, in his shirt and trousers, was sitting upon the other bed, yawning noisily, and in a very dangerous way if he had any consideration for his lower jaw.

My money and the watch seemed all right, my companion sleeping the sleep of the weary; and the "gentleman" paying not the slightest attention to me, I lay perfectly still, watching his movements, until he put out his candle by taking it from the socket and holding it upside down till choked in its own grease, when the loud creaking of his bed told that he had taken possession; and feeling certain that robbery, if not murder, must ensue if I closed my eyes for an instant, I lay patiently waiting for the morning, after ramming my elbow hard into my companion's side, but only to produce a stifled grunt.

Ten minutes perhaps I watched, and then everything became more and more confused and indistinct; so, feeling that I was dozing off to sleep, I made up my mind that I would sit up; but while idly transmitting the will of the mind to the motor muscles of

the body my eyes closed, and opened no more until the occupant of the other bed had dressed and gone.

My first act was to feel again for watch and money. All safe. The next, to rouse my companion, and soon after we were seated at a table downstairs, discussing thick slices of new bread, daubed with yellow fat, and cups of the same beverage as was placed before us on the previous night—though now able to be stirred without disturbing a thick deposit of brown and black composition. But my every effort was fruitless; and turning from the breakfast in disgust, I tried, now the first excitement of the step was over, to smother down the faint spark of repentance that kept twinkling in my breast by skimming over the morning paper, my first glance being directed at the advertisement column for the words, "So many pounds reward—absconded," with a general description of my boyish figure, oblivious of the fact that my absence was only then about being discussed, for the occurrences of the past night seemed to have taken place weeks back.

My companion was more prudent than I; for though but little better able to finish his meal, he took the precaution of doubling up three of the slices of bread and butter in his handkerchief, before declaring himself in readiness for a start.

The dull fog, and gloomy, slippery streets did little towards raising our spirits as we made our way, in accordance with former plans, into Soho-square, trying to revive our flagging energies with thoughts of glittering uniforms, jingling spurs and sabres, and caracoling horses; and full of these bright visions, we went boldly up to a door in Bateman's-buildings, a passage leading out of the square, and rang a bell.

I can answer for my own heart beating heavily, and a strange choking sensation rising to my throat, as the door opened, and though not nine o'clock, a wan, untidy-looking woman appeared with a beer jug in her hand, and upon learning our business, ushered us in, pointing to a door where noisy voices could be heard; and assured us, in broad Irish-English, that there were some nice gentlemen in there, and the "sargeant" would soon be down.

A glance in at the door displayed as rough a crew of young men as ever waited the friendly services of the drill-sergeant; and shrinking back from such genteel com-

panionship, we encountered a man whom we presumed to be the sergeant from his red-striped trousers, though the rest of his uniform was a dingy shirt, unbuttoned at the collar, and displaying his grisly, unshaven neck, his yellow, bilious-looking skin, and the cord-like muscles of his throat, while his face was yellow and sunken, and he trembled violently, as if from ague.

"Wait a bit, boys," he said; "she'll be here d'reckly with the drop, and then I can talk to you."

Here were smeary paint and dauby canvas at the back of the picture with a vengeance. This was one of the gaily-uniformed heroes immortalized by Ackerman—framed and glazed, and hung up over tempting placards—announcing the great demand for dashing young men for the Hon. the East India Company's service. This was no helmeted and moustached artilleryman, who had won his spurs, in the shape of a commission and so many thousand rupees for outfit, but a blear-eyed, disease-smitten wretch on the recruiting service; and Wisdom began to make herself heard, as she insisted that there were two sides to the tempting picture upon which we had been wont to look.

But they would have none of us: I was too slim and boyish, and as we had cast our lots together, my companion would not join the highly respectable society of recruits; and we stood again in the square, stayed from an insane desire to run the gauntlet of disease and death in far-off India.

"Where next?" I said.

"Woolwich," said my companion.

And making our way to London Bridge, we were soon on the Woolwich boat, and in good time were threading our way through the streets—where the inhabitants are divided into soldiers and civilians—where public-houses were then rampant, and the character of many of the inhabitants is best left untouched by the pen of the writer.

A smart uniform in a cavalry regiment was the goal of our ambition then; but we were not above inspecting and commenting upon the appearance of marines, sappers and miners, marine artillery, foot artillery, and part of a foot regiment present at that time. But nothing suited our taste till we came upon a troop of horse artillerymen, mounted upon their strong, fast horses, and dressed in their own peculiar and smart uniform. They were declared to be the

very thing; and ten minutes after we were in the great barrack-yard, stating the object of our visit to a fine-looking, heavily-moustached sergeant.

But times were peaceful then, and recruits in plenty; the consequence being that our offer of serving her Majesty was superciliously received, and declined after we had been marched before an adjutant, who appeared anything but struck with our appearance. We had a proof, though, of how plentiful men were on our way out, in meeting a score of stout young fellows enlisted into the artillery, but brought here for the adjutant to have first pick of any likely smart fellows he might fancy for the horse brigade.

"Where next?" said my companion this time.

"Maidstone," I said, somewhat despondently; for I was beginning to attach less value to my personal appearance than I had before starting that morning, when I had fondly imagined that the offers of such volunteers would be snapped at.

On, then, to Gravesend by boat, and from thence by train to Chatham, where we did not pause, but mounted an omnibus which ran through the pleasant Kentish hills, and past Kit's Coty House to Maidstone, where was the depôt of the cavalry regiments serving in India; while from time to time fresh batches for each corps were sent out as men died off or were invalidated.

Something attractive here for young eyes in the smart, clean appearance of the fine young men hanging about the barrack-yards in their trim uniform. The Horse Guards had not in those days issued an edict to the banishment of the hussar jacket slung over the shoulder, and considerable doubts were in our minds as to which uniform would best become our persons—namely, that of the hussar, lancer, light dragoon, or the scarlet of the heavy. To our disgust, though, we found that we must be guided by circumstances—for they were not suffering in those times from a scarcity of recruits, the consequence being that men were only taken where there were vacancies; while, as we were mere boys, they took us not, and with lightening purses and heavy hearts we made our way back to Chatham.

The afternoon was gloomy when, after a feast of bread and cheese and beer, we made our way into the great desert barrack-yard, to encounter a few foot soldiers of the line in their dirty red undress uniform—

some in flannel. Here they were cleaning belts, there lolling smoking, while a glance here and there showed us the interior of the bare barrack-rooms.

Where was the glory—where the smart uniforms—where the dashing mien of the dragoons? All absent; and looking at one another in a sidelong, downcast way, we crawled unquestioned out of the place.

And then arose the question—"What next?"

Money was very short now, or we should have gone to Canterbury—another cavalry dépôt—for after what we had seen, foot-soldiering seemed hideous; but if we could not achieve to mounted practice, we determined to try the sappers and miners, or, failing them, the foot artillery.

An obliging tradesman at Strood furnished us with a short supply of cash in exchange for divers articles of wearing apparel; and that night, quite late, we reached Woolwich soaking wet, sad-hearted, and dispirited; and with so little of the hero left in our composition that I for one would most gladly have gone home had the opportunity offered. However, a night's rest restored a little of the elasticity of our spirits; and after a basin of coffee each, and some bread and butter, during the discussion of which I steamed off all the moisture I could from my coat, we started once more, with the honourable ambition now in our minds of aiding henceforth, until promoted to a higher rank, in sapping and mining the towns and forts of her Majesty's enemies to the best of our ability—being always equally ready to carry powder bags for the blowing-in of gates, or to form pontoon bridges under the sharpest fire that ever devastated ranks.

But it was not to be, though most probably the field marshal's bâton would have been in my cartouche box ready for me to draw out some day. It was not to be; for soon after going into the dirty streets we came upon a file of sappers marching to the Arsenal, one of whom was known to my companion, and as soon as he could get free he pounced upon us and led us to a friend, a corporal and shoeing-smith in the horse artillery—old fellow-workmen in the same blacksmith's shop in civilian days; and now, in place of being persuaded to enlist, we found that searchers had been upon our track; and so we became prisoners pro tem., to be forwarded to our friends.

A FEW WORDS ON MUSIC.

THERE is no instrument more common in a house than a pianoforte; but, at the same time, no object in the room respecting which so much ignorance is, as a rule, evinced. People know that if you touch the keys, hammers strike certain wires, and tone is produced. They know, also, that the piano gets out of tune, and has to be screwed up; and, worse than all that, too often the instrument gets old, shabby, and jangling at a rate which is quite out of proportion with its age. It is to remedy some of this ignorance that a very handsomely got-up little work has been published,* liberally illustrated, and designed not merely to trace the growth of our modern stringed instrument, but to render that descriptive and interesting to pianoforte players which has too often found a place only in purely scientific works.

The author touches very pleasantly upon the history of music, as appertaining principally to stringed instruments, from the days of Jubal and Miriam; introducing, too, the tradition that Hermes, about the year 1800 B.C., while walking along the banks of the Nile, struck his foot against the shell of a tortoise dried up by the sun, but in whose cavity cartilage and nerve were so stretched out that they were sonorous, and suggested to him the first idea of a lyre.

The Assyrian, Israelitish, and Egyptian harps and dulcimers are all touched upon in turn, with their smaller representatives, the lyres and lutes—these latter being the ancestors of the guitar, mandoline, and banjo.

The above-named instruments, excepting the dulcimer, were, as is well known, played by striking the strings with the fingers, the dulcimer being sounded by means of a little leather-covered hammer; and, doubtless, from this last came the idea of constructing an instrument wherein a series of hammers should be set in motion by mechanism—keys touched by hand forming the motive power. Similar works had, it seems, been already applied to the organ; but these were keys either worked by the foot, or broad affairs struck by the double fist.

The work goes on to enumerate the changes and the gradual progress towards the present perfection, explaining the clavi-

* "The History of the Pianoforte," by Edgar Brinsmead. London: Cassell.

therium, invented by the Italians about the year 1300; and next of the clavichord, an instrument so far advanced that it was the favourite of the great composer, Sebastian Bach. The first mention of this instrument in England was in the year 1500; though, according to one of Caxton's works, it was in common use long before amongst the French minstrels.

In course of time, however, the clavichord gave place to the virginal, an instrument made with brass wires, set in vibration by pieces of quill, which were forced past the strings by the pressure down of keys. The tone of these early pianofortes is well described by Dr. Burney as "a scratch with a sound at the end of it;" and they were notably weak and jangling in their tones.

The author illustrates his work with cuts of various instruments—among others, that of the spinet, the original of which is in the South Kensington Museum. Some of these instruments were, it seems, made in the most costly fashion. "One of Queen Elizabeth's virginals is still in existence in Worcester-shire. At the sale of Lord Spencer's effects, at Chichester, it was described as having a case of cedar, covered with Genoa velvet, the inside of the case lined with strong yellow silk. It is light and portable, being only twenty-four pounds weight, five feet long, sixteen inches wide, seven inches deep, and the front is covered entirely with gold. There are fifty keys, with jacks and quills, thirty of them ebony tipped with gold; and the semitone keys (twenty in number) are inlaid with silver, ivory, and different kinds of wood, each key consisting of about 250 pieces. The paintings of the Royal arms and the ornamentation give it a most beautiful appearance."

The English spinet, it seemed, varied little from the virginal, save in shape, which was nearly that of a horizontal harp. To this instrument a second string was added to each note, doubling the power and enriching the tone, and it now became the harpsichord; and here was one of the early ideas of the piano soft pedal, for a stop was contrived by means of which the jacks and quills which vibrated the strings were moved, so that when the performer wished to play softly he could act on only one set of wires.

The great Handel played on an instrument of this description, but he had three or four strings to each note; but it seems

the instruments were difficult to keep in tune. A harpsichord bequeathed by him to his secretary had two rows of keys, but in other respects much resembled an old-fashioned grand.

We may pass over Mr. Brinsmead's very able history of the progress of the pianoforte in England since the days of Handel, with the change from grands to upright cabinets, piccolos, cottages, and upright grands; the clever contrivances to produce a fair soft blow upon the wires, so as to get the sweetest tones; omitting, too, Erard's invention of the repetition action, with the many improvements culminating in the present action adopted by the house whose representative is the author of this work. Neither need we dwell upon the able exposition of the construction of a modern pianoforte from first to last; for there is much interesting matter towards the end of the work—one which every pianist, young and old, should read, from the practiser of scales to the able exponent of some great master's sonata or serenade. The part to which we allude is the chapter of useful hints upon selecting a piano, the management of the instrument when purchased, and the place where it should stand. The advice upon purchasing a piano, so as to be certain that it is well made, is so simple and genuine that we quote from it:—

"The only means of being certain that a piano is well made of seasoned materials is by purchasing one manufactured by some good maker, whose reputation would suffer by his name being upon an inferior instrument. We do not refer to makers who rely on the name made by the founders of their house instead of the quality of their manufactures; but we refer to those who are rapidly rising to fame by the recommendation of the instruments they produce . . . The so-called cheap piano must be avoided, for a really good pianoforte cannot be made at a very low price. Either the materials or workmanship must be inferior. The sales by auction, and by 'the widow of a musician,' or any of the various means employed for disposing of cheap, trashy pianos, are now too well understood to be trusted."

Mr. Brinsmead's book contains a vast amount of varied and useful information, and we cordially recommend its perusal, especially as it is written upon a subject which is one of the most common, but certainly least known, as any one may tell who

runs through his list of friends, and thinks of the jangling wire boxes, all French polish and veneer, which ornament their houses but distress their guests.

TOMBS OF THE KINGS OF GOLCONDA.

IN an elaborately illustrated work on architecture we find some fine engravings of the architectural remains of India and Persia, which recall to mind this expression of Ruskin's:—

"There are no works of decorative art more thoroughly excellent than those of India. They are, in all materials capable of colour, whether of marble or metal, almost inimitable in their delicate application of divided hue, and fine arrangement of fantastic line. This power, the love of subtle design, seems universal, and is developed in every instrument they shape, every building they raise, every gem they make; enriching with one profusion of enchanted iridescence the dome of the pagoda, the fringe of the girdle, and the edge of the sword."

Of nothing is this more true than in the wonderful display of grace and beauty, power and grandeur, exhibited all over India, in the ruins of a monumental and sepulchral character. The remains of a former age, they stand in the midst of the workaday world of to-day like vast reminders of the fact that though the hand which wrought, the brain which conceived, has faded out of sight, the idea it formed, the work it perfected, remains for ages, sure! Perhaps no country in the world contains so much which has historic interest, though mysteriously uncertain, as this land of India—the cradle, as many savans declare, of the human race. Nowhere is there such luxuriance of living, such gorgeousness of vesture, such magnificence of art attainments. Of to-day this is true, but especially of all that bears record of the past. Here lived and wrought races whose handicraft outlives the utmost achievements of these later times. No cities are so vast, no buildings so splendid, no undertakings so stupendous as those whose ruins lie scattered everywhere, providing material out of which new cities are being built, making but slight perceptible diminution of the huge overthrown piles lying everywhere broadcast.

But nothing of that past age which remains to bear testimony to its greatness ex-

ceeds the grandeur and beauty of the cities of the dead! All that was most graceful in carving, most exquisite in proportion, most gorgeous in colouring, and magnificent in architecture, were lavished in profuse prodigality around these sleeping places of those who were to repose until Brahma should absorb them into himself, Buddha reward them eternally, or Mohammed gather them into the completed glory of the heavenly Paradise.

Yet, even in India, no part is more full of these memorial places than the Nizam kingdom of the Decca district, in which is found that far-famed Golconda, once a province of grand dimensions, swayed over by a race of kings who counted their lineage back to the remotest ages—now a small town, so guarded, so watched because of its treasures, that strangers, whether European or Indian, can rarely penetrate within its walls. The province now called Hyderabad—once Golconda—has been for centuries known as the great diamond deposit of the East. From this district came the celebrated Koh-i-noor (Mountain of Light), dug from the rock deposits of the mines of Pannah, fifty fathoms deep, A.D. 1550, when the kingdom of Golconda was ruled by Kootub Shah, who lies buried here.

Six miles from the present capital, Hyderabad, lies the celebrated fortress of Golconda, which, deemed impregnable, and standing upon the summit of a conical hill, commands and overawes the surrounding country. This was once the abode of the Kings of Golconda, whose tombs lie thickly about it in the midst of gardens for miles and miles. Each of these mausoleums, and there are hundreds of them, occupies the centre of a large quadrangular platform, which is approached on every side by *ghauts* or stairs cut from solid granite.

They are for the most part constructed of grey stone, ornamented with stucco and the finest Indian porcelain, whose colours retain, after ages of exposure to the elements and the decaying hand of time, all their pristine brilliancy of hue and delicacy of tints. On many of them are engraved in white characters the names of the occupants, with some extracts from the Koran. These, of course, belong to the later ages of these ruins, after the conquest by the Mohammedans, subsequent, by generations, to the period when the ancient kings held sway here and builded their lasting memorials.

At a distance the appearance of this vast concourse of mausoleums has a most impressive and singular effect—a vast city, whose

“Tall spires and swollen domes
Gleam like scintillant stalagmites in the sun.”

In these splendid ruins are found the rarest forms of Saracenic architecture. Octagonal towers of red sandstone, inlaid in the most wonderful manner and designs with white marble; dome-like towers which seem formed of prismatic stalactites; arches grouped in the most symmetrical concord; mosque-shaped buildings, models of architectural beauty whose dome-covered roofs span arches of the most perfect proportions; slender turrets, with an exquisite elaboration of ornament; minarets whose pavilions and balconies of filigree work, supported on slender shafts, look like fairy palaces; massive, cathedral-like buildings, whose balustrades of gleaming marble are carved into every conceivable form and pattern—all these, seen from a distance, or viewed near at hand, awe the beholder with their grandeur and charm him by their beauty.

The whole country for miles contains these magnificent monumental remains; the most remarkable of which, the tomb of Akbarat Secundra, is said to exceed in splendour anything of the same character in the known world. In the midst of a square garden, filled with lemon, orange, and palm trees, it is built of red sandstone, excepting the upper storey, which is of the whitest marble. Entrance is gained to the gardens through four massive gates, upwards of seventy feet high, into causeways, hewn of stone, which lead to the platform (upon which the mausoleum stands), measuring 400 square feet and made of solid stone. The mausoleum is square, 300 feet on a side, built in a pyramidal form, rising in five terraces each 100 feet high. Around these run arched galleries, surmounted by rows of cupolas supported on slender pillars.

This is but a meagre description of these splendid structures, contained within this city of the royal dead, where lie the dust of a race of mighty monarchs whose names are even yet dear to the Hindu heart—whose power and deeds of valour are yet themes of poetry and song.

The celebrated Kleelee Kootub Shah, who claimed his descent from Japhet, son of Noah, and who died about 1578, lies here—one of the last buried heroes.

The veil which enshrouds India's past, hides from antiquarian and savant the names of the builders and the period upon which they wrought these mighty structures. Yet, like the cave-temples of Ellora and Elephanta—of whose magnificence no travellers are forbidden a sight, since no diamond shaft or pointed sword guards the way of access—they are thought to be largely the work of the age between the tenth and eleventh centuries, when the Brahmins, having subjugated their conquerors, the Buddhists, reigned supreme; and commemorated their triumphs in lasting monuments, carving their victories in stone, doing honour to their hero kings and warrior chiefs.

SUITED TO HER STATION.

THEY were not Ritualists at our church. They had no long-robed individual bearing a wand to usher ladies into one phalanx of ugly little, scrooping, rush-bottomed chairs, that scrooped when moved, and so small that when a lady sat on one her dress flowed over upon those on either side, the gentlemen being severally inducted to the other chilly rows across the aisle. They had no arrangements of this kind; but they had a pew-opener—Mrs. Starge—a particularly nice person, especially suited by nature to her station in life. She was a tall, uncompromising, stiff woman, very cornerish, with a hard face of a peculiar putty or pasty hue; and she was always robed in a dingy, sad grey dress—a shot, or mingling of oatmeal and soot—with the almost impossible peculiarity of possessing no light, but shades innumerable. As to her head, it was crowned with a tightly fitting, tightly tied-on cap—a very mass of little white satin bows and puckers. The borders were of that peculiarly funereal or coffin architecture known as “goffered,” and they set off Mrs. Starge's face to great advantage. A prim white muslin kerchief, bristling, bristly, and crackly with starch, set off her neck, with ends descending to be hidden and protected by a very stiff corset, which was manifested to the ear by strange creaking and crackling sounds, to the eye by a small peephole formed where one hook in the back of Mrs. Starge's dress had an objection to its relative loop.

She had been pew-opener of our church for twenty years; and those twenty years might have been forty, from the way in

which she lorded it over the congregation. There was a deadly feud existent between her and the beadle, supposed to be due to Mrs. Starge's trenching upon the duties of the latter official, and frowning small boys into an orderly state, but really on account of a certain jealousy touching Christmas boxes.

If not a regular attendant at our church, and unprovided with a sitting, you probably went rather late—say, during the performance of the introductory voluntary—and then stood dubiously waiting within the swing doors covered so warmly with baize, and there patiently tasted the brim of your hat. But not for long. Mrs. Starge was on the alert, and pounced upon you fiercely. She could tell in an instant from your manner what you were worth—that is, as to her—and would act accordingly, placing you in a comfortably cushioned pew where you would encounter temptations to sleep; or, morally taking you into custody, she would act the savage warder, and shut you up in a cold wooden cell—in a corner where it was dark—in a draughty place near one of the doors—in a gloomy spot beneath the galleries, or underneath the organ, where you sat patiently through the service, enjoying the sensation as of thunder being poured upon your head, while the deep-toned diapasons thundered up and down your spinal column.

Or perhaps she stuck you behind a pillar, where you could not catch a glimpse of the reading desk, and had to look round the corner at the pulpit; or, worse than all, in the churchwarden's pew—a great cellar of a place, into which you descended, and felt like Joseph in the pit, until set at liberty after the service, the two hassocks having been seized by earlier arrivals for the purpose of ensuring the raising of their heads above the panelling by which they were enclosed.

A very moral hedgehog was Mrs. Starge—a woman bristling with spikes. Enter the building, and she looked at you sidewise; when, if you obeyed the glance of her eye, well; if not, she held up a warning finger as if to say, "Come here, sir!" when stay back if you dared.

Mrs. Starge was a model pew-opener: the doors never creaked under her manipulation; she never shut in your coat tail or the folds of a voluminous dress; neither did she bump you by closing the door too quickly,

after the fashion of an omnibus conductor, to the disturbance of your equanimity or equilibrium; but she punished you publicly and severely if you attended church without books; for she would glide along nave or aisle like a religious ghost, and startle you by thrusting a dreadful liver-coloured, dog's-eared S.P.C.K. prayer book beneath your nose, so that you were compelled to take it, and then pay her sixpence as you went out and returned her the book you had not wanted. In fact, if you had been accustomed all your life to a delicately bound, diamond edition of the Liturgy, it was not pleasant to stand up in a fashionable church holding the ragged-cornered, saw-edged, workhousey book. And you dare not thrust it out of sight, as I once did; for Mrs. Starge was sure to detect you, bring another book, and rigidly point to the place—be it Psalms, Litany, or Gospel—to your everlasting shame and confusion.

I almost wonder that I ever again dared to enter the church; but I did, though the next time I went armed with a pocket edition of the Common Prayer; when standing, according to my custom, with hands joined, and resting upon the pew edge—probably from an idea that I knew the service by heart—at me came Mrs. Starge, for I heard her crackle as she approached; but I was ready, and on my guard. Nearer and nearer she came, and in the excitement of the moment my lips grew parched, my palate dry. She made a thrust at my breast with the most disreputable book in her collection; but I warded it off with an elastic Oxford bijou, to her visible discomfiture and my own satisfaction; for I may as well own to that being the only occasion upon which I can recall laughing in church. But I laughed then heartily, though with that suppressed, apoplectic, internal rumble introduced by the elder Mr. Weller.

I cannot prove the assertion, but I firmly believe that the woman used to repair to the pure spring of Holywell to replenish her stores—buying up old prayer books from the tea chests labelled "All these at three-pence!" And these horribly old, mildewed affairs she used to stitch and patch with a vile, sour-odoured paste, ready for keeping in a drawer beneath her seat; so that she must have made pounds out of them in the course of the year—making a sort of private church rate of her own.

If at Christmas time you gave the beadle

a shilling, he touched his hat, smiled, and generally showed that he was grateful. But this was not the case with Mrs. Starge, who seemed to demand money of you as a right; and you felt bound to submit to her silent extortion, feeling almost afraid of the woman, and feeling her under protest. I have no doubt but that she had a receptacle somewhere beneath the folds of her sad-hued robe; but how she disposed of surreptitious shillings and sixpences—no one ever offered her fourpenny pieces—was a mystery; for she remained as rigid as so much marble, or as a railway guard, when she became possessed of your largesse—somehow, no doubt, practising palmistry, but never unbending in the slightest degree.

Why, I've seen that old clerk wince and tremble in body—his voice shaking in unison—when the church was full, even to the aisles being taken up by sitters upon the vestry chairs, when, her duties performed, Mrs. Starge would join in the service, uttering the responses in a very audible tone, which you felt bound to imitate, and thus helping to drown the voice of the querulous clerk.

Mrs. Starge might very well be spoken of as "one in a thousand." That she was suited to her station, too, there could be no doubt; but she lorded it there most cruelly, worshipping Mammon to a sad extent; and though I have spoken of the edifice she professed to serve once or twice as "our," Mrs. Starge always, when talking of that church, invariably mentioned it as "my!"

RECOLLECTIONS OF MANITOBA.

FROM AN AMERICAN POINT OF VIEW.

THERE has lately been an international complication with the little province of Manitoba. Some citizens of Minnesota captured a swindler on British territory; the Manitobans captured the captors, and have handled them roughly. A little province that feels big could not miss such an advantageous opportunity of quarrelling with a big neighbour. And Manitoba is the biggest-feeling of all the dependencies of the English crown, and never doubts that H. B. M. rejoices in the loyalty of the polyglot and variegated population of Manitoba.

It quarrelled with Canada once, insisting that it would not acknowledge the authority of the Dominion. It would be a "Crown colony," and lie next the monarch's heart.

They even had a ridiculous miniature war over it, and troops were sent all the way around the north shore of Lake Superior to conquer a settlement of ten thousand men, women, and children—Indians, squaws, papooses, and Orkney Isle people. It's a way Manitoba has of making up for its littleness and remoteness by keeping up a sputter. And now that the home Government has snubbed it, and the Dominion has awed it into submission, what could little Manitoba do? Buried in the wilderness, without railways or telegraphs, snowed under half of the year, and dependent on dog-sledges for its mails, the great busy world outside was in danger of forgetting the existence of a colony on the Red River. What's the use in having governors, chief justices, attorney-generals, high sheriffs, low constables, lord bishops, and what-nots in a settlement of ten thousand people, if nobody knows anything about it? So what should this little province, with less than half the population of some counties in Minnesota, do, but ruffle itself into a fury of insulted national dignity because a worthless scoundrel has been arrested in the wilderness on the north side of an imaginary line that divides Manitoba from civilization!

It is now thirteen years since I spent ten days in this settlement. It had then changed its general designation several times. We knew it as Fort Garry, the Red River Settlement, and the Selkirk Settlement; but it was just then aspiring to be called a Crown colony, and had adopted the name of Assiniboia, after the Assiniboin Indians, whose blood is rather freely mingled with that of the white race in many of the settlers. Assiniboia gave way presently to Winnipeg, and now we have Manitoba. Thus the settlement not only makes itself big, but it makes itself many.

I went down on the second or third trip ever made by a steamboat. We had travelled five days in stages from St. Paul, four of them through an almost unbroken wilderness, to reach the Red River of the North at Georgetown, not far from the point at which the Northern Pacific crosses the river now. For two days we had travelled down stream toward Lake Winnipeg without seeing a house, except at Pembina. On the morning of the third day we began to come into the settlement. The houses are mostly of hewn logs, fitted into frames, whitewashed and thatched. The farms are from eight to ten

chains wide on the river front, running back two miles. So that there is for thirty miles one continuous row of snowy white log houses, with straw roofs, and with little white terrapin-like ovens in the dooryards of many of them. This settlement was made here more than half a century ago, and the races are sadly mixed. The children that stood on the banks staring at our boat were of every hue, from sandiest Scotch to darkest Cree Indian.

At the Fort and at other places in the settlement there is a higher order of houses. The social distinction of Manitoba divides all the world into two classes—the "Shingle-roofs" and the "Thatch." There are many people of refinement and culture. Archdeacon Hunter, Mr. Black, the minister of the kirk, and other gentlemen, I found to be well-informed and excellent. The best educated and most refined lady that I saw was a half-breed, educated in the settlement. She was the daughter of a distinguished Scotch explorer, whose wife was a full Indian, and unable even in her old age to speak English. The daughter was cultivated and devout, the wife of a minister, and, it seemed to me, in every way an admirable lady.

When I was there, Governor Mactavish reigned over the settlement. He was a forceful man, and a fine illustration of Scotch sturdiness and of Scotch stiffness. I had a favour to ask which he granted readily, but with no sign of suavity. I was not a little embarrassed by what seemed a rude reserve in him; and as he was Chief Factor and ever so many other things beside Governor of Assiniboia, I thought that maybe I had violated some rule of official etiquette in addressing him. Thinking to thaw him out somehow, I said, in my blandest fashion—

"I am unacquainted with your etiquette, Governor Mactavish, and if I have used the wrong style in addressing you, I trust you will overlook it."

He looked up from what he was arranging for me, stared at me in surprise, and, without relaxing a muscle of his stern face, blurted out—

"It mak's no deff'rence at all!"

I voted him a boor; but afterwards met him several times in St. Paul, and found that he could be very pleasant. He was an amateur botanist, and as ours was a scientific and Government party, he called on us as in duty bound. One of the party was

Mr. Samuel Scudder, then too young to be distinguished, but already showing that he was, in embryo, the greatest of American entomologists.

"What department of nat'ral history d'ye tak' specially, Mr. Scooder?" asked the Governor.

"Entomology, sir," said the young man.

"Oomph!" exclaimed the Scotchman, solemnly—"beetle catcher!"

Whether it was real contempt or pleasantry we could not guess, but Mr. Scudder did not admire it in either light.

The population is of the most motley sort—English, French, Highland Scotch, Lowland Scotch, Orkney Isle men, Chippewas, Crees, Assiniboins, English Cree half-breeds, French Cree half-breeds, Scotch Cree half-breeds, French Chippewa half-breeds, English Chippewa half-breeds, Scotch Chippewa half-breeds, Scotch Assiniboin half-breeds, English Assiniboin half-breeds, French Assiniboin half-breeds, Orkney Isle Assiniboin half-breeds; and so on through every possible permutation of the series of white and red races.

The people in the settlement are like Bryant's description of nature—they "speak a various language." English, French, Gaelic, Cree, Chippewa, and Assiniboin are the principal. Nearly everybody speaks two or three languages. If a boy's father is Scotch and his mother Cree, he will learn Gaelic from his father, and Cree from his mother, and English from others. Some children prattle innocently in five languages, I believe. The English of the lower classes is called "Red River English," and is a strange jargon. For instance, the name for a woman is wife. A young woman is a young wife; a little girl is a little wife. They are frank enough thus to show you that they think a woman born to marry. A woman is always a wife on Red River.

I feel bound to say that the Selkirkers (or Assiniboians, or Manitobans, or Winnepeggers, or whatever they now call themselves) have no reason to like Americans. The worst part of the settlement, when I was there, was that inhabited by the most heaven-forsaken race of Yankees the sun ever shone upon. Their principal business in that day was the manufacture and sale of what was technically known as American whisky, and the keeping of the lowest houses of ill-fame. The whisky was made upon a peculiar recipe, which I

was at pains to procure, and which, for the sake of any enterprising young man wishing to embark in a dishonourable and lucrative calling, I shall give as nearly as I can remember:—Two gallons of alcohol, two gallons of molasses, two pounds of tobacco, and two drachms of strychnine. This as a basis for a barrel of whisky. The rest water. The ingredients, except the water, were hauled over the plains on ox-carts. The half-breeds were very fond of this delicious stuff. It made "drunk come quick." But after awhile the clergy, tired of burying the dead ones, and Bishop Taché of the Roman Catholic Church, Archdeacon Hunter of the English Church, and Mr. Black of the Scotch Church, combined to hold temperance meetings; and when I was there eight hundred half-breeds had signed the temperance pledge; so that our poor countrymen in the Selkirk settlement were suffering from this foul conspiracy to destroy their business.

THE DEATH OF A HERO.

THOROUGHLY imbued with a religious feeling of the righteousness of the cause for which he was fighting, Admiral Korniloff, upon the evasion of the Russian Commander-in-Chief, set himself gallantly to work for the defence of Sebastopol. Aided by the great engineer, Todleben, wherever a weak portion of the defences could be found new buttresses were raised, new trenches were formed, and every precaution taken; and this at a time when, in spite of every effort, it was plainly enough to be seen that should the Allies assault at once there was nothing left for the garrison but to die at their posts. Capitulation seems to have been never once thought of; while by constantly going round and addressing the defenders, he roused in them a feeling of religious enthusiasm, similar to that by which he was moved so deeply.

But though in sight of his followers the Admiral preserved a gallant bearing, yet in his inner soul he seemed to feel that he would fall; for on the morning of the allied attack he entrusted a letter he had written to his wife and also his watch to a cousin, saying half playfully, but with words of significant meaning, "I'm afraid that here it will get broken."

Then, mounting his horse, he rode along the lines, visiting fort and bastion, encourag-

ing the men, giving orders for the removal of the dead and dying, seeing that a proper supply of ammunition was kept up, and having the men 'provided with water where he found them suffering from thirst.

As if setting danger utterly at naught, he rode on where the round shots were humming and plunging, and shells bursting in the air. On dismounting at the central bastion, he mounted the banquette, in company with Admiral Nachimoff, to watch the effect of the Russian fire upon the opposing batteries. And here they calmly stood, while from moment to moment the shot came crashing in, striking parapet and defenders, till Korniloff was covered with dust and blood from the wounded men.

His subordinates vainly endeavoured to dissuade him from visiting the posts where the grim fight was going on; but, replying that his duty was to see all, he went on visiting battery after battery. He rightly judged that his presence amongst his men would give them the encouragement that he could plainly see they needed, for they had been suffering in a manner enough to try the stoutest hearts. Infantry standing for hours under fire, to which they could not reply, and at some guns the artillerymen and sailors having been entirely destroyed. In some places there had even been symptoms evinced of a desire to move off in confusion; but the master-mind made fresh arrangements, and new confidence seemed to spring up wherever he went.

It was almost with affection that some of his officers begged of him at least not to expose himself to the fire of the English batteries, telling him it was impossible for a man on horseback to pass along the line of the trenches without being struck down; when Korniloff replied—

"You can never run away from a shot."

However, he rode through the mitraille, and reaching the slope of the Malakoff, he was greeted by the men with loud cheers, which he checked, telling them to wait till the English batteries were as silent as the French—then disabled by an explosion—and then to cheer.

Dismounting, he now began to pass through the batteries on foot, and on reaching the Malakoff Tower he found its guns silenced, but a well-sustained fire still kept up from the earthworks. After proposing that the ground floor of the Tower should be turned into a temporary hospital, he

turned to go towards where, under shelter, the horses awaited him; but he had not taken four steps before a round shot shattered his thigh. His officers closed round him, raised him in their arms, and bore him beneath the shelter of the breastwork, between two guns, when, exerting himself, he managed to gasp, "Defend Sebastopol," and then fainted.

With every care he was borne to the ambulance, where, recovering a little, he took the sacrament of his church, and then, perceiving that his men shrank from lifting him upon the litter that was to be his couch to the hospital, and knowing that it was from a dread of giving him pain, by a sharp struggle he managed to place himself upon the litter, and was borne away.

At the hospital, at times, his agony was so intense that shrieks were wrung even from his brave heart; but during an interval of rest, he exclaimed to the chief of his staff—

"Tell everybody how easy it is to die when the conscience is quiet."

Then, faithful servant as he was, he prayed—

"God bless Russia and the Emperor. Save Sebastopol and the fleet."

Afterwards the potion he had taken relieved his pains for a while, till an officer came in with news, when, being told that the English guns were silenced, this brave enemy of the Allies collected his strength to give one feeble cheer, to sink back, and in a few moments breathe his last.

TABLE TALK.

MR. HENRY LEE has been very busy of late proving the utility of an aquarium for studying natural history. His last discoveries are in connection with the pipefish, which he finds to be "a marsupial animal in which the functions of the male are in some degree similar to those of the female kangaroo and opossum. In some other species there is no sub-caudal pouch, but the eggs are received in separate cells or depressions. It has been generally supposed that they are made to adhere to these concavities by a viscid secretion, which subsequently hardens; but I am inclined to believe that the enveloping membrane pre-exists in the male fish, and that each egg is not simply adherent, but deposited and vivified in a separate little cell by itself, instead of in one general receptacle." Mr. Lee

discourses very pleasantly about the matrimonial life of these creatures. He says:—"The penalties of paternity fall heavily on the Benedict pipefish, poor fellow! For when the eggs are ready to be extruded from the ovaries of the mother, she does not, like other fishes, deposit them in the sand, or attach them to sea plants, or cast them adrift to float on the surface of the waves, as if they were 'nobody's children,' to be hatched in due time, unless devoured by predatory enemies, which is the lot of most of them; but she goes to her husband and says, 'Syngnathus, my dear, I now place in your charge our immature offspring. Take care of these eggs. Do not sit upon them and crack them, but carry them about in your pocket, until the little embryo which will be developed in each of them shall one day burst its shell, and ask you to let it go free.' And he, not being used to 'society,' and its baneful unnaturalness, thinks it neither ridiculous nor disgraceful to share with his wife the care of their progeny, so accepts the responsibility, and performs the duty assigned to him by nature."

A SCHOOLMISTRESS was fined the other day for caning a child to such an extent that the little monkey had seven wheals to show at the police-station. In reply to the gentleman who represented the School Board authorities, the child said that she was found fault with for making a noise. She was ordered to take her slate to the class teacher. She did not do so, and the defendant boxed her ears. She still did not take the slate, and the mistress then caned her. Of course she did, and it seems inexplicable that she should be fined. If a mistress is to be punished for administering proper punishment to a rude, ill-bred child, what is to become of her authority and her power of teaching? Those who have ever taught only know the trouble, annoyance, and difficulty in dealing with the children of the poor, the majority of whom are anything but obedient and well brought up. As to the punishment, a cane will easily raise a wheal, which means a little wholesome pain, as it should—else where is the utility? Teachers in poor schools have a terribly hard task, and require all the backing up possible to enable them to adequately fulfil their arduous duties.

Communications to the Editor should be addressed to the Office, 19, Tavistock-street, Covent-garden, W.C.

ONCE A WEEK

NEW SERIES.

No. 346.

August 15, 1874.

Price 2d.

JACK'S SISTER; OR, WOMANLY PAST QUESTION.

CHAPTER XLI.
NO HOPE WHATEVER.



“FOR you, miss,” the maid said, coming into the sunny breakfast parlour where Miss Leyburn and Enid were at work — or rather, the former was working, and her niece, grown sadly silent and languid of late, was leaning back in her chair, her hands resting on her work, and the patient, grey eyes looking far, far away into the hazy, sunlit distance. It was just eight days since Jack had left; and Miss Leyburn was observing, rather irritably—

“It’s really very strange he doesn’t write. Only one line saying that he was in Paris, and nothing more. I wonder if he has left, and missed our letters. Let me see. I wrote, and you—you wrote twice, didn’t you? Once on Monday, and once—what day was it? Enid, why don’t you answer me? I don’t like to find fault; but it is customary in well-regulated families for a young lady to listen with at least a show of interest when her elders are speaking.”

“I beg your pardon, auntie,” said Enid, bringing back her thoughts with a nervous start; and then the servant came in, holding out the letter on its quaint silver salver.

“From Jack?” asked Aunt Jane, forgetting offence in curiosity.

“No; a London letter. I don’t know the hand. It looks—why!— Oh, auntie! Merle—poor Merle!”

And Enid rose to her feet, trembling all over, her eyes round and wide, and her face the colour of death.

“Merle? What astounding impertinence! Jack was right, then,” cried Aunt Jane, indignantly.

But Enid stopped her, the tears streaming fast—

“Auntie, don’t—he is ill, dying! Oh, my poor boy!”

And in a voice choked with sobs, she read aloud the letter, one written by a Mr. Dyce, a London surgeon, and stating that ten days ago he had been called in to attend a young man suffering from an attack of brain fever, brought on by some sudden shock acting on a fragile and already overwrought constitution; that he had found the patient in a very dangerous state, and quite delirious; that he had never rallied or recovered consciousness since; that all his cries were on the one name, “Enid,” uttered with frantic and overpowering energy; and that as he seemed to have no friends, and was now sinking so fast as to be past hope, Mr. Dyce had thought it right to examine his papers; and finding several letters signed “Enid Leyburn,” and testifying that the writer was a near and dear relation, he had taken the liberty of writing to that lady, in the hope that she would come up to London without delay, and lend the aid of her presence to soothing the last hours of his fever-stricken patient; after which followed the address of Merle’s lodgings.

“Of course you will not go,” said Aunt Jane, calmly.

Enid looked at her.

“I don’t believe it, for one thing,” added the elder lady. “It is a hoax, got up with some friend of his to frighten you into a reconciliation. Infamous! As if you had not been deceived enough already.”

And roused by the look, at once shocked and determined, on her niece’s face, Miss Leyburn went on to demonstrate that, even

if it were true, it would be highly improper and unsafe for her niece to go up to London on such an errand; that neither Jack nor Mr. Leyburn would have dreamt of allowing Enid to run after a man who had jilted her; that proper inquiries could be made, and, if he were ill, nurses and medical attendance provided; but as to outraging propriety, and setting all the neighbours talking afresh, Miss Leyburn would neither countenance nor permit it. In vain Enid tried to soften her, tried persuasion, even coaxing—Miss Leyburn stood firm; and at last the girl stood up.

"It is no good talking," she said, sadly; "I must go, even if you will not come with me. He may be dying now—dying in want of me. There is a train at 12.30. I can catch that."

"In direct defiance of my commands, Enid!" cried her aunt, aghast at such obstinacy in one usually so docile. "Are you mad?"

"No; I am only trying to do right. Auntie, can't you trust me? Have I not been all my life as careful about propriety as even you could be, and would I seem to go against it if it were not for a higher duty? It makes me wretched to vex you; but I can't disobey my mother. I promised her to watch over him through all my life; and, oh, Aunt Jane, don't make it harder for me! But I must go—I must."

"Very well, my dear," said Miss Leyburn, coldly, the old jealousy of her sister-in-law roused by this frank preference for the wishes of the dead. "Then I shall hand you over the keys, and write to your brother, telling him why it is impossible for me to remain in charge of a house where my orders are defied."

She rose up as she spoke, and Enid said no more. Perhaps she thought silence was best. Her aunt was a Leyburn also, and the Leyburns were not a yielding race. Without another word she went out, quietly and swiftly made her preparations for departure, ordered the pony carriage, and told her old nurse, who still lived in the house, a petted pensioner of the family, that she would be wanted to accompany her to London. Unfortunately, Aunt Jane had preceded her, and nurse Alice demurred. She would go herself, and right gladly, to nurse Master Merle, though he was always a troublesome boy; but her young lady in such a wicked, God-forsaken place as Lon-

don, and Heaven only knew what sort of lodgings, perhaps catching the fever—it wasn't right; and what would Master Jack say?

Enid stopped her very gently, but firmly—

"We will not talk about it, Alice. I must go; and you must be ready to go with me, or I shall take Jane."

And at that awful threat Alice succumbed at once. The old woman was mightily jealous of any one but herself waiting upon her darling.

When all was ready, Enid went to her aunt's room, and bade her good-bye. She was not crying now, but her eyes were heavy with tears, and her face looked unnaturally pale against the black dress and bonnet.

Miss Leyburn looked aghast.

"And you are really going," she said—"going alone to this young man's lodgings in some London back *slum*? Forfeiting your character for ever."

"No, auntie," said Enid, quietly; "I am taking old Alice, and I hope—I think my character stands too high to be forfeited by going to nurse my cousin on his deathbed. Good-bye. I wish you would have come too; but I dare say you will forgive me when I am gone."

And without more words she went, taking the reins into her own hands for once, and considerably increasing Miss Leyburn's respect for her by doing so.

How long that journey to London was! It seemed hours before they reached the outskirts of that vast city, whose rows and rows of wet roofs and blackened chimneys seemed to extend in every direction as far as the eye could reach; hours more before the train had worked its way through these, and stopped at the huge station, with its bawling cabmen, bustling porters, and seething, shrieking, hurrying crowds of men, women, and boys; more hours still before they had left all these behind and were at their destination. She had only been in London once before, Alice never; and the latter was in the abnormal state of fright, bewilderment, and agitation peculiar to old countrywomen on first arriving in a great city. But there are people whom it seems impossible to fuss or fidget, and Enid was one of them. Though she felt like one passing through a painful dream—though brain, heart, and soul were filled to overflowing with the one sad object of her journey, the means for reaching that object

never became vague or confused in her mind, however great the confusion around her. The very sight of the intense calm on her pale face awed Alice's lamentations into silence, and procured her such prompt attendance from porters and cabmen, that she was the first of the passengers to leave the station and be driven over the crowded, foggy, clattering London streets to her destination.

It was reached at last. A mean house, in a dingy street near the river—a street so dingy, so poverty-stricken, and even disreputable-looking, that old Alice began to cry and fret at her dignified young mistress being brought to such a locality; and even Enid shuddered as she stepped out of the cab, and entered the doorway, where stood a filthy little lodging-house drab, whose frowsy head and cap fluttering from one ear were about on a level with the young lady's waist. The next moment she had forgotten street, house, and maid alike, for at the door of the shabby little parlour on the first floor stood a gentleman in black, who came forward, saying her own name in tones of pleased surprise.

"Your patient?" Enid gasped.

She knew he was the doctor, though she did not even look at him, but at the door beyond—the door leading into an inner room. It was with difficulty even those two words were uttered.

"Just the same. I am glad you have come, and so promptly; but, my dear madam, you look quite ill yourself. You must not think"—following her glance—"of going in directly. He is quite unconscious; and, though your presence is a relief to me, you must remember that there is no hope—no hope whatever."

No hope whatever! She seemed to repeat the words; but, in reality, they were only ringing in her ears, ringing and mingling with the waving walls of the room, and the dizzy, whirling brain. No hope! No hope!

Why did it strike her like a blow from some heavy hand? She had known it before, read it in the doctor's letter—journeyed up to London, angering Miss Leyburn, and possibly Jack, beyond forgiveness, on that one persuasion; and yet, now that she heard it uttered, it seemed like a new sentence of death. Her mind refused to grasp it; her whole body reeled and sickened under the shock; and her hands

went out with a mute, imploring gesture, as though catching at something to protect her.

"Sit down, Miss Leyburn, sit down," the surgeon said, hurriedly, laying one hand on her arm to guide her to the little horsehair sofa. "There, don't stir. I ought not to have spoken so abruptly; but I thought you were prepared."

"Don't 'ee give way now, don't 'ee—my lamb," urged old Alice, coming to the girl's side with her bottle of salts, and a heart divided between sympathy for her nursing and a dread lest the latter was compromising her dignity. "Her poor brother, you see, sir."

"No, not my brother," Enid murmured, steady to truth even in this horrible faintness. "My—"

"Yes, yes," put in the surgeon, kindly. He knew the relationship as well as she did. "Don't exert yourself. No, that's nothing"—as a long, moaning cry came from the next room. "Your brother is quite delirious—he will go on in that way for hours."

But Enid was all herself again now. That pitiful cry, in which her own name seemed to mingle, had restored her scattered senses quicker than any amount of salts or sal volatile. She stood on her feet at once, very pale, but quite composed, and with a gracious dignity which infused a new element of respect into the pitying patronage of the doctor's manner.

"I am quite strong now, thank you," she said; "and I must go in, please. I will be very quiet; but he—he is not my brother, but my cousin, and my husband that was to be—he wants me, I am sure. Indeed, you may trust me not to do him harm."

Looking into the grave eyes and steady mouth, the doctor thought he could. At any rate he offered no resistance, beyond a faint murmur of deprecation on the score of her own fatigue; and opening the door of the sick room, let her pass in before him.

She went straight to the bedside and stood there, seeing nothing and feeling nothing at first save a great blackness, a terrible awe, as though she had passed the borders of this world, and were gazing into the obscurity beyond. Then her eyes seemed to open suddenly, and she saw in one moment the narrow bed; the one small window, with an old table cloth pinned over it to keep out the light; the crumpled pillow; the dirty, tumbled bed-clothes,

stained with medicine, and clenched within the poor skeleton hands; the dark head, whose waving silken curls had rested against her shoulder so often—so often in earlier days: which had been humbled to the dust beneath an actress's feet two weeks ago.

Thinking of the other patients who needed him, and wondering whether he dared leave her, the doctor was watching her narrowly. He saw her lips quiver, and her eyes fill; but, as if guessing his hesitation, she turned round and spoke, very gently and quietly—

"If you please, I would rather be left alone; and you have other business, I dare say. My nurse will stay here, and do anything you like to direct her, sir. You need not stay now, Alice. I will call you in a few minutes."

The doctor bowed, and went out. He saw she needed solitude just then, and silenced Alice's remonstrances by calling her into the outer room with him. Then the door closed; and for the first time—the first time since he had taken his arms from round her, and gone away to betray her trust and ruin his own honour—Enid was alone with her cousin: the man whom God had stricken down in his folly, with the ashes of the Dead Sea fruit dry and crumbling in his mouth, and the memory of her outraged love maddening in his brain.

Did she think of him in this light? Far, far from it. In that supreme moment, the past year, with all its passionate love, its capricious neglect, and final, fatal betrayal, faded away altogether, and for ever. The man lying there upon his bed of pain and fever was no longer the lover whose selfish passions had wrecked her life, but the little child whom her mother had confided to her care, the boy she had played with and protected, the college youth in whose young ambition and ripening talents her sisterly pride had exulted with such glowing, happy anticipation—who had been all the world to her, and for whose happiness she had been willing to sacrifice herself and all that that world had to offer her.

"Merle! Merle! Merle!" she cried, falling on her knees, and taking his burning hands into her soft, cool clasp, while the tears rained down fast and free at last. "If I could but have helped you better! Oh, my poor, poor boy—my darling!"

Somehow he seemed to hear her. The fierce look of pain faded out of his hot, flushed face; the gaunt hands tightened

round hers; and the dry, baked lips parted again with her name—"Enid! Enid!" repeated so often, and with such an accent of terror and beseeching, that it almost broke her heart to hear him, and not be able to satisfy that agony of need.

She did her best. She lifted his head from the hot, flattened pillow to her cool, round shoulder. She held his hand tight in one of hers, while with the other she swept the dark hair off his fevered brow, and bathed it with sweet, refreshing scent; murmuring words of comfort all the time, in tones tender as a mother over her suffering child, soft and soothing as a little dove above her wounded mate. So the doctor found her when he came in to pay his evening visit; and so he left her, kneeling in the darkness, with the unconscious head still upon her shoulder, and all that fevered moaning stilled at last. Merle was in a heavy stupor, the first approach to sleep during the last ten days.

His cousin sat up with him that night, and many others. Alice took her place in the morning, and again in the evening; for Enid was far from wishing to burn out her strength in romantic self-devotion, and so break down before the end—the end which must come, do what she would to ward it off. The night was his worst time, the fever running highest then—though never so high as before her coming, never so fiercely but that the sound of her gentle voice could soothe its ravings into silence; but in the morning he was wont to fall into a sort of coma—a stupor which only the fixed, unseeing eyes showed was not sleep; and then Enid would lay his head softly on the pillow, and creep away to her little attic room and hard bed upstairs, there to bathe her weary head and hands, and fall asleep as soundly as a child, till Alice came to warn her of the doctor's visit, and send her down to receive him. Mr. Dyce was not alone in his attendance now. A great physician came three or four times to call at No. 15, Minchin-street; but he could do no more for the sufferer than the surgeon had done—nothing but shake his head, and agree, in solemn whispers, with his modest coadjutor that death was only a question of days. The constitution was worn out, and as soon as the fever ceased to burn, life must cease also. There was no appeal.

"He may recover consciousness at the end—probably will," Sir William said, con-

descendingly, in answer to Enid's anxious question. "But I cannot promise it, nor advise you to count on it as a certainty; for, even if the brain be not permanently injured, the bodily exhaustion will be so great that—that, in fact, when the fever dies, our patient will probably be capable of nothing but dying too. You may not even know the exact moment."

"In sleep," suggested Mr. Dyce.

"Yes, or coma—fainting, in short. Very sad case, I am sure. So young a man! and did you say a B.A.? Ah! very distressing indeed; but when you have no constitution to work on—ah, thank you. Good morning. Pray believe, my deepest sympathy; and Mr. Dyce fully competent. *Good morning.*"

So, with courtly bows, and pocketing his two guineas, the learned pundit departs, leaving nothing behind but a heavier load of patient sorrow in Enid's grey, sweet eyes, and an extra shade of civility in the dingy landlady's manner to her new lodger, as being the means of attracting that grand carriage and brace of liveried flunkeys to the smoke-felted purlieus of Minchin-street.

The sick room looks very different now. Pillows of down and snowy linen have replaced the coffee-coloured drapings and knotty wool bags of the fevered couch. Cool, green curtains and white blinds exclude the light, and the view of chimneys, pots, broken bottles, and stray cats from the little window. The tattered drugget, in which the most practised acrobat must have tripped his feet twenty times a day, has been taken up and replaced by fresh, soft matting. The window in the outer room stands always open, letting in a current of such pure air as might filter through soot, and smoke, and river exhalations, to the sick room, where long, frosted glasses of pure white lilies, cluster roses, scarlet geraniums, and dusky, southern-scented heliotropes, fresh from Covent-garden every day, fill the air with sweet, out-door odours of summer-scented gardens in the fair, sweet country far away. Everything is neat and orderly now. Broken cups, hecatombs of medicine bottles, dirty glasses, confusion and discomfort, all gone—banished by Enid's presence and Enid's fingers. And yet it is so little she can do; or else all else looks little while that motionless figure lies racked and fevered upon the bed, and Death waits with greedy hands, opening wider day by day,

to snatch his victim from the loving arms which would so fain have kept him off.

Sometimes, when the heat of the day was over, and Merle had grown more quiet, Enid would steal out, driven to get a breath of fresh air by Alice's entreaties, and passing along the narrow street, wander into yet dingier lanes and alleys, shrinking from the public thoroughfares by reason of her loneliness, glancing timidly from side to side, like a strange bird brought from distant woods to this foul place, and wondering at the grim, harsh-featured women issuing from teeming cellars and ruinous garrets; at the heaps of old clothes and worn-out boots exposed for sale upon the edge of the pavement; the herds of ragged, half-starved, grimy children; the haggard, bold-eyed girls, and gaunt, unshaven men; the unutterable dirt, and desolation, and God-forsaken misery on all sides.

Not altogether God-forsaken; for very early she had begun to distinguish, amid the roar and din of the great city, a little bell ringing out morning and evening, as if it were a voice from Heaven, calling the back slums to prayer. Since then, she had amused herself by following this bell; and had tracked it to a little red brick tower, rising over a low arched door, among a nest of the very poorest and meanest habitations. This door stood always open; and venturing to peep in one day, Enid found herself in a little chapel, very clean and neat—nothing but a double row of forms, a lamp burning within the wooden railing of the sanctuary, and within that a round window of stained glass, which threw "warm gules," and blues, and violets upon the tiny altar, covered with a white cloth, and surmounted by a plain wooden crucifix, and a bowl of flowers, fresh every day.

It was some little Roman Catholic or Ritualistic chapel—Enid knew that at a glance; but which of the two she could not tell for the life of her, her experience of churches being strictly limited to the old minster and Archdeacon Hamilton at home. After all, it mattered very little to her. At the hour at which she happened to be free there was never any service going on; and she got into the habit of gliding in day by day, and kneeling down in the cool, dim quiet to pray out her load of tears and sorrow alone. It was like laying down a weight of woe at the feet of the Saviour, for she always went home calm and comforted;

and how often in after-days she thought of the healing quiet of that small chapel, and thanked God for the refuge she had found within its nameless walls! No one ever troubled her meditations there. The noise and clatter, the laughter and curses from the street without, came softened by distance, like a heavy murmur upon the quiet air.

Now and then, a little girl, laden with a too heavy baby, tottered in and sat down to rest before going on her way. Now and then, a rude boy would throw a stone inside, and fly, laughing yet terrified, at hearing it rattle upon the wall. Two or three times she found some white-haired man, or bent and withered crone, crouched up near the altar railings—perhaps in prayer, perhaps in thought, perhaps only in the sleep their noisy, sin-crowded dwellings drove away. Once a wan-faced, haggard girl, gay with tawdry finery, and soaked with rain, drifted in for shelter, stared wildly about, and then with one low cry, "My God, have mercy on me!" covered up her head and slunk away again, as though unworthy to remain—poor fallen Magdalen!—in any hallowed place. But these were all that Enid ever met there; save that one day, as she was leaving, a clergyman—priest or parson his dress did not declare—stayed her on the steps with a kindly glance, and the words—

"I fear you are in great trouble. Is it one that can be helped?"

"No," Enid said, sadly; "only by God—there is no hope." Then, with another thought, "Are you the clergyman for this parish, sir?"

He shook his head decidedly.

"No, only a missionary priest. The parish church is St. Martin's; but one of the curates lives quite close to here, round the corner in Norfolk-street, number ten. Are you in want of him?"

"Not yet," Enid said, her eyes brimming.

And then she went on her way, though not without a kindly "God help and comfort you!" from the stranger to cheer her homeward route.

THE CASUAL OBSERVER.

AMONGST THE MARINES.

TO visit the Marine Barracks at Woolwich one might certainly go by land, but under the circumstances it seemed more suitable to go by water. So embarking at London Bridge upon a steamer fairylike only

in name, the arch was shot, and wheezing and snorting our engine drove round the paddles, which churned the water on either side. Ours did not seem a nice engine, but one that had seen its best days. It seemed suffering from chronic rheumatism in its joints, every one of which had apparently been rubbed with "iles;" but for all that they worked in a stiff, ungainly way, while the whole machine was in a state of violent perspiration. It squeaked, too, and snorted when the Bardolph-nosed captain transmitted his orders through a boy in a blue jersey, who yelled "Ease her!" "Stop her!" "Turn her astarn;" &c., &c. But we made way amidst the tiers of shipping, ran down no barges, though the men in charge seemed tugging at their long oars, for no earthly or waterly purpose but to make themselves tired, for their vessels floated along with the tide in an awkward, one-sided, selfish way that seemed assertive of the barge's right to the whole of the silent highway of the Thames.

Suddenly, from looking down at that tearful, groaning engine, one's attention was taken up by the contemplation of the floating bodies turning slowly in the eddies. Poor brutes! Who can wonder at dogs suffering from hydrophobia? Enough to make them, when drowning seems to be man's idea of what ought to be done to a dog. From his state of blind puppydom his troubles begin. Fan has presented us with four puppies—drown them; Fido has broken his leg—drown him; Don has the distemper—drown him; there's a new law now, and the dog tax is to be enforced—drown them; and so Thames' stream presents us with many scores of floating bodies, which look as if all the bagpipes of the peasantry of the Abruzzi had been cast into the river to float up and down with the tide. Poor brutes! No wonder that dogs suffer from hydrophobia, and gnash their teeth and snap.

Past tiers of shipping, past ships growing, and past ships falling away; past where the din of the steam hammer resounds upon iron plates; past places where watermen look for lost ones cast up by the tide which washes slimy, muddy pile and pier; past large screw steamers, entrances to docks, with forests of masts behind; and then past pleasant-looking inns, with pleasant memories attached of ease taken and small fish eaten. The names of Lovegrove and Quartermaine rise before one, and the two waiters at the window seem beckoning to us to land. But no, we must

onward, or rather allow ourselves to be conveyed, and at last Woolwich comes in sight; and, with the recollection of the boys' training ship and the huge hull of the *Dreadnought* still fresh upon the mind, we land, and, shivering in the midst of rain, seek for warmth ashore.

Decidedly not an attractive town, Woolwich; but we came to see the Marines, and now, having found a most courteous cicerone, in the shape of a staff non-commissioned officer, our tour of the huge building begins.

A fine body of men, over two thousand strong, with the world for their field of action, and, by way of motto, "By Sea and Land;" and wherever the British flag is known there have our Marines shouldered musket or rifle. Their roll of engagements must be a long one, and such as would put to the blush the greatest of our line regiments.

First comes the hospital—a noble, red-brick building, at present unfinished as to its wings, but situated in a commanding position, overlooking the windings of the river for many a mile. Outside, well-kept gardens, with walk and terrace and lawn; inside, a noble corridor, with the wards branching from it at right angles—wards of the cleanest, lightest, and best ventilated, where the patients appeared to have every comfort that could be procured for them. Our friend Mr. Benham appeared to advantage in the kitchen, with his steam-cooking apparatus, whose superintendent told us, with a display of pride, that he could cook here for five hundred patients at once with the greatest ease.

But there always seems something oppressive in the best ventilated of hospitals, and we were glad to leave behind the pale, anxious faces watching you over the clean sheets of the little iron bedsteads, as well as the great-coated, white-capped figures of those patients approaching convalescence, and able to stand at "attention."

Now through guard-rooms, with men sitting round the fires, orderly-rooms, parade grounds, with squads marching and counter-marching to the commands of hoarse-voiced drill sergeants; sentries on duty with drawn bayonets, sutler's shop, with ample stock of provisions of all kinds, supplied to the men at cost price; and then to the reading and recreation rooms, open to the men upon payment of the sum of one penny per month. They are rooms that a country literary in-

stitute would be proud to own. The reading-room is large and lofty, as well as amply lighted; contains a capital library of modern works, wherein all our friends in fiction make their appearance; the tables are well covered with newspapers and magazines, writing tables are there, and altogether the place seems one which must prove a serious rival to the town public-houses.

But, unfortunately, private soldiers have not, as a rule, much intellectuality, and they would perhaps prefer the pipe and glass to books and newspapers or periodicals in a comfortable room; so there is something in the next apartment to wean these men from the public-house, for we now stand in a large, well-fitted hall, we might call it, containing some half-dozen very superior bagatelle boards, table nine-pins, draughts, chess, &c.; while at one end is a buffet, with tea, coffee, cider, and other refreshments always ready at a reasonable price. Truly this must be a step in the right direction. Past barrack-rooms, airy and open, beds neatly made, with every man's kit and accoutrements arranged at the head ready for use at a moment's notice; past tailors' and shoemakers' shops, large slates for the men to scrub their summer trousers, stores and armouries, and now to a room devoted to the musketry instruction, where men learn the use of that deadly weapon, the Snider rifle, so simple that our guide's expression was—"A child might use it." And truly, upon taking that weapon in hand, there seemed no difficulty in raising the breech, inserting a cartridge, closing it again, and then firing; for the act of inserting the cartridge constitutes loading and priming, the percussion tube being in the cartridge, and therefore cold fingers are not likely to fumble about and drop caps any more. Extreme simplicity seems to be the strong point in this rifle, but it appears that now quite double the ammunition will be used, for the rapidity of firing is something startling to those who have been accustomed to the old muzzle-loading piece.

Across another yard, down a narrow passage, and into another enclosure, where stand a few old grinning bulldogs in the shape of 32-pounder guns, upon their old carriages—guns of the past days of warfare; for on entering this door to the right we see what Armstrong has given us for assault and battery upon a large scale.

We stand now in part, as it were, of the main deck of a man-of-war—every beam,

plank, ring, bolt, and rack correctly represented. Right and left of us are the port-holes, and to every port-hole a large cannon, with all its tackle in working order. Shot, shell, cartridge, and cases, rammers and sponges, all are here; but this black monster in front takes one's attention, and we go forward to make acquaintance with a 100-pounder Armstrong gun—a wonderfully different object to the cannon of old. To begin with, we stand at the breech, and look right through it, telescope fashion, noting the deeply cut grooves of the twisted, rifled barrel; then we find, or rather are shown, how the ball and cartridge are thrust in behind, while there comes down from the top the large breech piece, to be screwed up tightly in its place, while the percussion tube is forced through the touch-hole; and then beware, O enemies!

But it is "beware" one's self; for this main deck is alive with some hundred and fifty men, turning, twisting, and training the ponderous guns as if made out of wood. There appear to be from eleven to thirteen men to a gun, and now at their drill a piece is dismantled and put together again with almost lightning-like rapidity; then loading and firing practice, but after the fashion of cap-snapping among the volunteers, for there comes no bellowing roar to stun our ears. But imagination will run riot, and, standing here beneath these beams, one fancies the tramp of men on deck above us, the stifling sulphurous smoke creeping slowly in wreaths from the port-holes, roar after roar as the broadside is given; while in reply the timbers and planks crack up like matchwood, and then go down, as the large conical shot come tearing in. What's that—blood? and the deck slippery? No, fancy only! for the boards are worn smooth, and no men have been carried down to the cockpit. But it looks uncommonly real to see those men wielding so easily these huge deadly engines, and a visit like this makes one feel more thoroughly how vast a sum John Bull must spend yearly for the sole purpose of keeping in order the brace or two of pistols he has ready for setting foreign burglars at defiance.

Out in the fresh air once more, to pass mess-rooms, non-commissioned officers' club-room, I suppose we may call it; and then again past more barrack-rooms, with their arm racks and accoutrements all as bright as hands can make them.

But we have music as well, for here go the bandmen, in their neat white uniform, to awaken the echoes upon the common, where stand the Indian trophy guns—the monster in the centre, upon its hideous English, tasteless, abominable carriage, with every relief disproportioned and bad, while perhaps the worst piece of taste is the bombastic inscription telling of where it was cast. Truly one feels glad that one was not Marquis of Anglesey, to have been Master-General of the Foundry Department.

The large shells lying here have doubtless their history, but the sentry only knows that they are about a yard in diameter, and must not be touched; so as it is near dinner-time, back to town, where there are desks and sheets of paper we wot of, so that we may give our readers an account of our observations amongst the Marines.

TO JAMAICA, 1750.

AT Deal, a certain aleseller will warrant that the ale, as he orders it, shall be carried good to the West or East Indies. His way to prepare it is this—as he told me himself—he twice mashes it with fresh malt, and twice boils it well; yet all this kept it not from souring, as I observed during my stay there. We bought of it to carry to Jamaica; and then he directed us thus:—To every runlet of five gallons, not to be stirred any more, put in two new-laid eggs whole, and let them lie in it. He said that in a fortnight or little more the whole egg-shells would be dissolved, and the eggs would become like soft eggs—enclosed only in a thin skin. After this the whole white would be preyed on, but the yolk would not be touched or corrupted. By this means we did preserve the ale to Jamaica, and it was much better than at Deal.

Concerning the Thames water, it is not only observable that in eight months' time it acquires a spirituous quality, so as to burn like spirit of wine (and some East India ships, I am informed, have run the hazard of firing by holding a candle near the bung-hole at the first opening of the cask), but also that the smell of it is not perhaps unwholesome; for we drank it all the way, so as to hold our noses, yet had no sickness; but we had a proportion of brandy each week, which perhaps might correct it.

If you take off the bung from any cask that smells, and let the air come to it, it will

in twenty-four hours come sweet again; and if you take a broomstick, and stir it about well, it will become sweet in four or five hours, casting a black lee to the bottom, which remixes with it, and so occasions a third or fourth fermentation and odour; after which it smells no more. But though Thames water does not putrify, yet other waters (as far as has been hitherto observed) do become irrecoverable and dangerous to drink.

I observed at sea, after we were out of the Narrows, the sea grew darkish, and after perfect azure; yet was it much more salt the farther we went, as I tried by a water-poise, which rose about half an inch above the sea-water in the Downs, and at twenty-four degrees more, two inches; but after that I never observed any difference unto Jamaica, the sea being probably so impregnated with salt as not to imbibe more.

On the point the iron guns of the fort were so corroded that some were near become useless, being perforated almost like honeycombs; but the guns which lay in the salt water were not much damaged by rust, as we found upon taking up of some.

Many things receive damage by the air. Not only iron rusts, but even linen rots; but silks once exposed to the air do rot without losing their colour. If a lancet be once exposed to the air, it will rust, though you presently put it up again; but if it be never exposed to the air, it will hardly rust.

As to the colour of the sea, I conceive there is a great variety in it and its streams, as in grounds at land, which may occasion the sickness in some places more than in others; for the sea smells differently in the Narrows and Main; and as to colour, it is of a sea-green, and more sickly in the Downs than at Torbay, and on Plymouth coast more than past the Land's End, in the Bay of Biscay than in the Long Reach. Something, perhaps, may be imputed to the difference of the waves, which are short, and make a copling sea in the Bay of Biscay (yet we came not within eighty leagues of Cape Finisterre). In the Long Reach it is a long rolling wave, but never breaks. About Florida, Virginia, and New England, it is a great rolling wave, but breaks. And as the sea coloureth from green to darkish, and so to blue, so in our return it coloured from blue to dark, and so to green. When we were in the latitude of Barbadoes, and had sailed so for some days, and appre-

hended ourselves to be within seventy or eighty leagues, I observed the sea was black and thick, not transparently blue, as before, and the foam against the ship sides was turbid, and of another consistence than before; but when the sun was high, it turned green, whereupon I asked the master, who told me we were within sixty leagues of Barbadoes, and that the sea was there soundable, whereas before it was not so. But at Barbadoes, in the anchoring place it was blue; as we rowed ashore, in the shallow it was whitish; and so at Jamaica, near the shore, it is transparently white, but within three yards more transparently blue.

As to the burning of the sea, I could never observe so great a light as to perceive fishes in the sea off the stern; yet was the light great, and at some times more than others. I suppose several subject earths, currents, and winds do vary it. I observed it burned more at Deal the night before we set sail than ever in the voyage. All the water ran off our oars almost like liquid fire; the wind was then S.E., and the seamen told me that at east and south winds it burnt most.

I shall not trouble you with an account how two contrary winds poise each other, and make a calm in the midst, ships at a distance sailing with contrary gales at the same time.

It is observable that in the Indies, such places as have any high mountains have also every night a wind that blows from the land, maugre the Levantine wind which blows at sea, but with a slacker gale at night; which seems to show it depends not only on the motion of the earth but sun. There is none at Barbadoes or Saona, but at all the other islands; and in Jamaica every night it blows off the island every way at once, so that no ship can anywhere come in by night, nor go out but early in the morning, before the sea breeze comes in. I have often thought on it, and could imagine no other reason but that those exhalations which the sun hath raised in the day make haste, after his strength no longer supports them, to those mountains by a motion of similar attraction, and there gather in clouds and break thence by their own force and weight, and occasion a wind every way. For as the sun declines the clouds gather, and shape according to the mountains; so that old seamen will tell you each island, in the afternoon towards evening, by the shape of the cloud over it.

And this attraction appears further, not only from the rain that gathers on the tree in the island of Ferro, spoken of by Sir R. Hawkins in his observations, and Is. Vossius upon Pomponious Mela, as also Magnusus de Manna, but also from the rains in the Indies; there being certain trees which attract the rain, so that if you destroy the woods, you abate or destroy the rains. So Barbadoes hath not now half the rains it had when more wooded. In Jamaica likewise, at Guanaboa, they have diminished the rains as they extended their plantations. But to return to Jamaica. That this night wind depends much upon the mountains appears by this, that its force extends to an equal distance from the mountain; so that at Port Morant, which is the easternmost part of the island, there is little of land breeze, because the mountain is remote from thence, and the breeze spends its force along the land thither. I shall further illustrate this kind of attraction. In the harbour of Jamaica there grow many rocks, shaped like bucks and stag-horns; there grow also several sea plants, whose roots are stony. Of these stone trees (if I may term them so) some are insipid, but others perfectly nitrous. Upon those other plants with petrified roots, there gathers a limestone, which fixes not upon other sea-fans growing by them. It is observable, also, that a Monchinel apple, falling into the sea and lying in the water, will contract saltpetre.

It is commonly affirmed that the seasons of the year betwixt the tropics are divided by the rains and fair weather, and six months are attributed to each season. But this observation holds not generally true; for at the Point in Jamaica scarce fall (as was hinted above) forty showers in a year, beginning in August to October inclusively. From the Point you may look towards Port Morant, and so along to Ligonee, six miles from the Point; and you will scarce see for eight or nine months, beginning from April, an afternoon in which it rains not. At the Spanish Town it rains but three months in the year, and then not much; and at the same time it rains at Mevis, it rains not at the Barbadoes. And at Cignateo (otherwise called Eleutheria), in the Gulf of Bahama, it rains not sometimes for two or three years; so that that island hath been twice deserted for want of rain to plant it.

At the Point of Jamaica, wherever you

dig five or six foot, water will appear, which ebbs and flows as the tide. It is not salt, but brackish; unwholesome for men, but wholesome for hogs. At the Caymans there is no water but what is brackish also; yet is that wholesome for men, insomuch that many are recovered there by feeding on tortoises, and yet drink no other water. The blood of tortoises is colder than any water I ever felt there; yet is the beating of their hearts as vigorous as that of any animal (as far as I have observed), and their arteries are as firm as any creatures I know; which seems to show it is not heat that hardens the coats of the arteries, or gives motion to the heart. Their lungs lie below the diaphragm, extending to the end of their shell. In the oesophagus are a sort of teeth, with which they chew the grass they eat in the meadows, which there grows at the bottom of the sea. All the tortoises from the Caribbees to the Bay of Mexico and Honduras repair in summer to the Cayman Islands to lay their eggs, and to hatch there.

There is no manner of earth but sand at the Point; yet I have eaten melons, musk, and water-melons that have grown there. A great many trees also grow there, especially mangranes and prickle-pears.

In some ground, that is full of saltpetre, your tobacco that grows wild flashes as it is smoked.

The fruit of trees there of the same kind ripen not at one time. There is a hedge of plum trees of three miles long as you go to the Spanish Town; on it I have many times remarked some trees in flower, others with ripe, others with green fruit, and others to have done bearing, at the same time. Jasmines I have seen to blow before their leaves, and also after their leaves have fallen again.

The sower sap, a pleasant fruit there, hath a flower with three leaves; when these open they give so great a crack, that I have more than once run from under the tree, thinking it all to be tumbling down.

There is a bird called a pelican, but a kind of cormorant, that is of taste fishy; but if it lie buried in the ground but for two hours, it will lose that taste, as I have been told for certain.

I tried some analysis of bodies, by letting ants eat them, and I found that they would eat brown sugar white, and at last reduced it to an insipid powder; so they reduced a pound of salad oil to two drachms of powder.

Most creatures drink little or nothing there, as hogs; nay, horses in Guanaboa never drink; nor cows, in some places of the island, for six months; goats drink but once perhaps in a week; parrots never drink, nor paroquets nor civet-cats but once a month.

The hottest time of the day to us is eight in the morning, when there is no breeze. I set a weather-glass in the window to observe the weather, and I found it not rise considerably at that time, but by two o'clock it rose two inches.

Venice treacle did so dry in a gallipot as to be friable; and then it produced a fly, called a weavil, and a sort of white worm. So did the *Pilulæ de Tribus* produce a weavil.

There is in the midst of the island a plain, called Magotti Savanna, in which, whensoever it rains (and the rain passeth along the island before it falls there), the rain, as it falls upon the seams of any garment, turns, in half an hour, to maggots; yet is that plain healthful to dwell in.

A CAVE TALE.

"NOW, sir, we'll just ease her head in close to that rock, and you can come forward and watch your chance, and jump ashore. Do it at the right time, or you'll get wet-footed. Once you're there, we'll run her up on to the boulders, and pull her out of reach of the tide."

Roused from the long look I was taking over the boat's side down into the clear depths of the sea, where bass were pursuing shoals of sharp launces amidst the bright-hued seaweeds that fringed the pale green rocks, I climbed over the thwarts, stood up, and as the boat closed in I leaped on to a huge mass of granite, one of the bottom stones of the walls of a natural granite temple, whose Gothic arch was hung with the most graceful of ferns, while the granite walls were stained of the brightest hues by the many growths which here flourished. I was now some twenty feet from the mouth of the cave, while beneath me for flooring there was the pale green sea, heaving and throbbing restlessly; but farther on there were the huge granite boulders rounded by centuries of storms, where the two boatmen were hauling up the boat, whose sides grated over the stones as they ran it up; while a little clambering along the granite ledges,

slippery with seaweed, would bring me to their side.

Beyond them I could see the cave run upwards, evidently far into the cliff, for its extent was concealed by the gloom; but the roof glistened with a metallic-looking, bright green moss, and I could see that the view of the sea, as seen from the depths of the cave, would amply repay me for a little exploring.

As I expected, the view of Mount's Bay from the interior was beautiful in the extreme, for the blue sea and sky appeared as if framed in a setting of rock and fern; but as for the interior of the cave, there was little to repay the explorer—rough earthy walls, loose stones, ready to fall from the roof, and an incessant "drip, drip" of water to form pools upon the floor, rendered travelling anything but pleasant.

However, the part of the cave more open to the sea was certainly very beautiful, being truly a rough Gothic temple, hung with the most delicate of tracery, while the courses of the granite stones were almost as regular as if placed there by human agency.

Upon returning to where the sea rose and fell amongst the boulders, I found the old fisherman who had guided me sitting upon a huge round stone, gazing into the water, and he seemed to wake with a start from a reverie as I spoke.

"Ah! this is a lucky day, sir. I haven't seen the sea so calm for weeks. Very little swell puts a stop to any landing here; for the water washes between these rocks very fiercely, and would knock a boat to pieces in no time. Curious place, isn't it? Famous place, too, at one time. You see, there's a fine depth of water at the mouth, so that you can row a boat right in, and you're regularly out of sight directly. Many a bit of smuggling has been done here in the old times before there were so many of the Coast Guard about; but that sort of thing is all done away with now.

"Did I ever smuggle? Yes, a deal. Who didn't? Why, 'most everybody had something to do with it; and these caves along the shore here have had many a load of brandy run into them, and would have had a many more, only we could only work it when the sea was very calm; though I have run in here when the boat was bumped sorely, and more than once we've been cap-sized, and been swimming about amongst the brandy tubs, with the chaps round on

the rocks seeming to hesitate as to which was best to hook out—a brandy cask or a man.

"You see, a good time used to be looked out for, the revenue boat watched, and then a *chasse marée*—that's a French lugger, you know—would stand in as soon as she dared, and then every boat would go to work, and we'd have her cargo out in a wonderful short time, and hidden away long before the cutter could come down. Then, at night, a party would collect on the top of the cliff; carts would be at the nearest road, and the little kegs would be swung up by ropes over the mouth of the cave, and then away they'd go. Every one was mixed up in it, farmers, gentry, and all; for if you had wanted them to prove that the wines and spirits they put on their tables, or the silks and velvets and kid gloves their ladies wore, had paid duty, they would have been puzzled.

"I went into it strongly as anybody at one time, and never troubled myself to think whether it was right or wrong. I did it for profit, and, as a rule, it was far more satisfactory to the pocket than fishing; but it has been a sore spot in my conscience ever since, for through me it was the death of as fine a lad as ever stepped.

"It's forty years ago now good since we were busy one night, running in the cargo of a French lugger. Brandy she had on board that time; and in my boat, besides two more, was my brother's boy, a lad of eighteen, and a fine, manly-looking fellow too. He had persuaded me to let him come, and thoughtlessly I said he might, and fine and pleased he was, and useful he made himself handing in the casks, and then helping to land them.

"It was a bright, moonlit night, and all was going on as swimmingly as could be—the Frenchies were jabbering away, and our men were doing their bit of work quietly—when just as I had got our boat loaded, we heard a gun, and directly after we saw, shining in the moonlight, the white sails of the cutter, which had just stolen round the point you saw before we turned in here. She had come upon us suddenly, for we had been trying a ruse—as the Frenchmen call it—sending a boat's crew up to the norrards after another lugger, which was to stand off and on as if waiting for signals, and when overhauled, of course she had nothing aboard but fishing nets. But the lieutenant in command of the cutter had been tricked

too often to be cheated this time, as he now showed by the gun he fired across the lugger's bows.

"Away went the boats—some one way and some another—and as we lay to at the oars ours went through the water very fast; so that we soon put a few rocks between us and the cutter; while, as it happened, out of four boats ours was the only one that made for the cave.

"My plan was to run right in, just the same as we did to-day, unload her till we could run her in upon the boulders, and then try and climb up the rock on to the cliff, which I thought perhaps we could do by means of the rope—one getting up and then helping another.

"Well, we got out of sight of the cutter, and soon knew that the lugger was trying to show her the rope's end and making off; for, echoing amongst the rocks, we could hear shot after shot fired, whilst I felt sure that the cutter's boat would be on the look-out along shore and in chase of us. However, we got safely in, though there was a pretty good swell on, and we had two or three heavy breezes as we came along. I jumped out and held on by the painter, while the kegs were run right up into the dark, past where you are now, in no time. Then a sharp run placed the boat out of reach of the waves, and we turned to climb along the ledge that you came along from the landing rock.

"'Hold hard!' I said, all at once, 'we may as well try and hide her, for they may come poking and prying along here, and if they don't see the boat perhaps they won't land.'

"'But the ledge is nearly covered with the tide,' said Tom, my nephew.

"'What, are you afraid?' I said.

"Before the words were out of my mouth he had jumped into the water up to his middle, and was back first to the boat, which lay just about where I pitch this stone, for there weren't so many boulders then. So at it we went, and by main force ran the punt right up, steep as it was, to where we had hid the oars, close up by the brandy kegs, and far out of sight of the cave's mouth, when we stopped to wipe a little of the perspiration from our faces.

"'Now, then,' I said, 'no time to lose;' for it struck me that the tide would make it difficult for us to get out, and so I was leading the way down again, when, just as I got here where we are, I heard the rattle of an

oar in the holes, and just turning the rock into the full moonlight, and coming into the cavern, was the cutter's boat. The next moment we were all hidden behind pieces of rock, and taking advantage of the darkness to crawl farther and farther back.

"I knew they would hardly land, for the tide was flowing fast, and I could hear it coming in amongst the rocks with a sharp rush that I knew would bother them. So I lay still, thinking how we should get off ourselves—for I did not mean to stay where we were—when suddenly a light flashed in, lighting up the cave, so that but for the rough rocks they must have seen the kegs; for it was the cutter's boat, burning a blue light. Directly after came the heavy thud of the cutter's gun to recall the boat; and, to my great relief, out she backed, leaving us once more in darkness.

"We saw her pass out in the moonlight and turn the rocks, narrowly escaping a capsizing as she did so; and then, knowing there was but little time to lose, I led the way, and, clinging to the rock, began to pass along the ledge, now covered with the sea, and at every wash of the waves the water came to my middle. But that troubled me very little; and, passing quickly along, I made my way to the rock where I landed you. The two men followed me, and then saying, 'Now, Tom!' I began to look out for the best way up.

"Tom made his way to my side, and I was just going to start, when a wave came with a sharp run, and the rock being covered with weeds, Tom slipped, and, uttering a sharp cry, he disappeared in the black water where the moon did not shine.

"For a moment or two I could not move, but directly after I was down on my knees, to reach out my hand to him when he rose, and then, not seeing him, I plunged in and felt about swimming, with the waves bearing me where they would; for one has but little power in such a hole, for the water runs like a cataract. Once I thought I saw his hands out of a wave, and I dashed towards it, regularly leaping through the water for a moment, for the stream was with me; but the next instant I was swept back right into the darkness of the cave, with the wash of the tide sounding horrible in my ears, and the long, leathery strands of the weeds seeming to cling round my legs. Now, all at once, the water began to show phosphorous, and splashed in golden light upon

the rocks, while with the strength of despair I struck out, shouting to the two men for help, as I seemed to see my brother's agonized face rise up before me when I told him his boy was drowned. That was the last thing I seem to recollect, for the tide now had risen high enough to come round the rock there to the right; and as I struggled out once more to where the moon shone, a wave caught me and dashed me back, so that I struck my forehead on a corner of one of the rocks. I just remember feeling my hands glide over the slimy stone, and then I seemed to go down into the deep black water, and all was like sleep.

"I came to again, held up on a ledge of the rock out there by the mouth, for one of my mates had caught me as I was floating by him. My temple was bleeding sharply, and that, I suppose, brought back my senses, for they were keen enough when I said to him, 'Where's Tom?' and he did not answer; for the pain run through me like a knife as I knew what the silence meant.

"We never found his body, sir, which must have been washed right out to sea; and now, if you please, as the tide's rising, we'll be off again; for this place, even so long after, gives me quite a turn, though I fancied I had got over it. Along the ledge there, sir, to the rock. That's right; and when we come close in you'll leap on board.

"That was a bit of a slip, sir; but you're all right, and I'm glad we're out in the sunshine again. I didn't tell you, though, that the cutter took the lugger, though they never found the cargo; but that affair quite cured me of smuggling."

A HAUNTED HOLE.

TAKE the first turning to the right, up from the Beach, through a court where you may hear the steam plough of civilization hard at work—the steam press; then into Drury-lane; off again to the right, and you will come into Hopeless-street, where the sun seems afraid to shine, and the houses are packed full of hopeless tenants. Then you may go into a street where shop-boards are loaded with cheap goods; where butchers pile up cheap pieces for dirty people to turn over with dirty fingers, and then perhaps buy, perhaps leave; where vendors of cat's-meat find a locus standi; where white-scrubbed boards display curious

preparations of the inner economy of the ox or cow, side by side with gluey-looking hoofs, and strange collections of rolled-up, musty fragments, held together with skewers. Cheap vegetables are there in plenty, pickled whelks, hot eels, faggots, hot sheep's heads, baked potatoes, pigs' or sheep's trotters, *bonnes bouches* innumerable for the dwellers around who have money to invest.

For it is a rare district which hems in Flare-market, while the rarest and richest spot—richest in population—is Slaughter-court. An agreeable name, and if by any other name it had smelt as sweet, it would have been no advantage to the inhabitants who thickly thronged therein. It was a pleasant place for children, since they could visit the handy spots where greasy, blood-smearing men knocked down bullocks, or stuck smoking knives into the throats of passive bleating sheep; at least such children as lived to run alone, for here they died off as thickly as flies when a cold and biting wind speeds through the streets; and a fine harvest was reaped here by the cheap undertaker.

Slaughter-court, Flare-market, where the gas burns so brightly of a night! and where night and day, spring, summer, autumn, and winter, walks a ghost—the ghost of the grating.

A fearful ghost—a blighting, savage, death-dealing, ghastly shade; the leader of a troop of pestilent scourges—a spirit who points here, and Cholera obeys his hest; who points there, and Typhus hurries off; who points now, and Diphtheria goes to a house; who points then, and Consumption swoops down. For it is a deadly, fearful shade, and fierce is the battle it wages with the people in Slaughter-court. The grating stands at the end of the court, and leads down to a drain, the drain to a sewer, and the sewer to the great black river which flows through our mighty City; and though the people of Slaughter-court tried to choke the demon back with all kinds of unutterable filth, yet here at all times walked the deadly ghost, a ghost in these nineteenth century days, the enemy of all but the undertaker.

No one had ever seen it, but all knew the ghost was there; and whenever the undertaker's man brought in one of those cold, hard-lined cases, people shook their heads and said the ghost ought to be laid; and men sitting in vestry said it ought to be laid; writers in newspapers and magazines said it

ought to be laid; doctors, lawyers, statesmen—everybody said it ought to be laid; but the ghost came again out of its slimy lair, swept up and down the court and its neighbourhood, and laughed, for it knew that people talked much and did little. One man said that the grating where the ghost came up should be trapped, and a trap was set; but the ghost still came and went, for the trap caught it not, and the invisible shade still slew its hundreds.

Down in the country there had been a sharp rime frost, and with it a dense white mist, through which the sun looked fiercely red, while every hedge and spray was silvered over with frost-work. But in London, and about Slaughter-court, the mist hung in the shape of a dense fog—yellow, clammy, smoke-burdened, and suffocating. The very lungs rejected it, and set up an irritated cough; the eyes ached, burned, and smarted; while the head throbbed painfully. One, two, three, four days had the fog hung on Slaughter-court, where all day long people burned wretched, flaring, yellow-flamed dip candles to see their way about the gloomy rooms, whose windows were thick with London dirt. And now the grisly shade, that the keen frosty air had driven shivering back to its grated lair, stole out again, flapping its wings, first over one shabby home and then over another, when from off those wings fell a minute dust—the seed of the disease that should make these homes desolated. House after house was visited; room after room; spots where the falling seed would fall upon good ground, and bring forth its manifold fruits—fruits nurtured by carelessness, greed, and bitter poverty.

The ghost flapped its wings and smiled as it looked now here, now there: here at children that seemed to have been born old—sharp-featured, sharp-eyed, corner-bodied children; not naked, but in their shabby rags, foul and loathsome, they seemed to lack the honest, comfortable aspect of the bare savage. Keen, cutting children, who could smoke, and swear, and blaspheme—fac-similes of the older children, their progenitors—children in good, patriarchs in evil. He looked there, upon hollow-cheeked lads—thin, stunted lads—men in years, but whose beardless faces had the looks of sickly boys of fifteen, and a peculiar under-handed air about their every feature, which seemed to speak of a want of mental and bodily stamina; upon girls who had probably

never heard of the word "innocence," as they laughed and jested with the other denizens of the court; upon old men—old before their time; upon old women, wives, and mothers; and then upon the hive-like houses where they all swarmed—houses wanting in everything that should make a home, seething and overflowing in their own filth; houses sheltering from forty to eighty beings to breathe the poisoned and polluted air which hung in a dense, sour, fetid vapour in passage and upon staircase.

A rare place for thinning off the population—the foul and ulcerous part; for generating a coarse and worse breed yearly—a race that know not of modesty, honesty, or cleanliness—a race that we gather our garments around us and shun; but who amply revenge themselves upon us by spreading the dust from the foul spirit's wings.

And yet, with all the failings and wants of those of Slaughter-court, there were the human virtues struggling to assert themselves even when choked down by the many vices. Love and sympathy were strong, and would make themselves known in the sad-featured mother who wept over her lost one, and the sympathizing neighbour who whispered comfort.

But it was the undertaker who fattened more than the landlord upon Slaughter-court; for when one died, old or young, child or suckling, the cry was the same, "Let's have a decent berrin," and contributions would fall in from all around—here a halfpenny, there a penny, twopence, sixpence—while a "friendly lead" would make up the rest, and perchance a hundred friends and neighbours would be at the funeral. There was no slackness of work at Elman's, round the corner; and the tapping of the little hammer might be heard early and late, hollow and echoing, while the ghastly, bloated-headed cherubs on the black ornaments and coffin furniture looked on at the preparations to provide a decent end for those who had never had decent beginning or middle to their lives.

The doctor came not here so often as the Slaughter-courtiers went to the doctor at the "spensry," or the "orspital;" but visits for help were frequent; when science began to smother out the fever fires, and then, as soon as the sufferer returned, the ghost of the grating chuckled, and gently blew with its fetid breath, and fanned the fire with its wings, so that the burning glowed again,

while the heat-robbed nature shivered and trembled in spite of the fiery disease. The doctors worked, and the ghost worked. The doctors had the patient for half an hour a day, and the ghost had him for twenty-three hours and a half a day; so the ghost conquered again and again, time after time; and the doctors sighed, and talked of parish improvements, and fresh air, and drainage, and then shrugged their shoulders in despair of change.

And night came, and the fog lifted, for the breeze tried to force an entrance right through the court, but it could not. So the breeze failed, and the fog settled down again, foul, heavy, and dank, covering wall and window with tears, and making everything clammy to the touch. The policeman, heavy booted, tramped to the end, looked down as far as he could, listened, and walked on. Then his heavy-nailed boots were heard upon the wet, greasy pavement till he had passed; but he went not down Slaughter-court, where the one gas lamp burned slowly and sputtering with the foul air that was in pipe and lantern; and beneath, now all was still, up came the ghost from the grating, laughing trap and iron bars to scorn, as it floated slowly up—a thin, transparent, ghastly mist, that rose and sank, and passed through nook and cranny, and enveloped all it came near. Now small and compressed, now expanding and huge, it floated here and there till morn—if the dingy gloom of Slaughter-court merited the name—till morn appeared, when it passed over tank and cistern and butt, and gazed down in the dim water at a face far below—a grim, blue-cold, hideous face, still and impassive, or again racked as with pain; now with bright staring eyes, now with those eyes closed, as if in sleep. Long and lovingly the ghost gazed upon this face, till sleep grew heavier, and the eyes opened not. The face was hideous, but the ghastly parent saw only the lineaments for loving—for the face in the water, blue-cold in its depths, was that of a ghostly offspring, now at rest, but perhaps again to spring forth and devastate, as did its parent, at some future time as cholera.

And still in ignorance of the dangers round, here teemed the population; the many windows were lit up by the dim burning candles; and when, sick, faint, and sinking from the foul odours of the place, the people called another spirit to their aid—a spirit that filled

them with a ghastly mirth, flushed pale and sallow cheeks, gave eyes unnatural brightness, while lips grew fevered and cracked, the hot breath foul and unwholesome; and some it maddened, some filled with a diabolical rage, which drove them to fight and tear those around. Others again sank in a terrible lethargy upon floor, stair, or pave; and in all it was the same deadly spirit gnawing at their vitals, and whispering—"More, more!" till, weakened and prepared, the ghost came and struck them down, ready for the "decent berrin'."

It was easy to get within the ghost's influence; but though, after a wild struggle, some escaped, it was not with impunity, for the deadly demon ever chased them when they fled to purer parts, and then in its malice at losing a victim struck down those around ere it returned to the grating in Slaughter-court.

And where is Slaughter-court? Repeated again, and again, and again, in our great cities; where many a ghost of the grating lurks: now shrinking within its lair, now darting out to spread desolation; the deadly enemy of man, but a spirit to be laid—to be combated successfully, and beaten back step by step—a consuming fire that we can smother out, or confine within limits; but ever and again we beat back the demon, or smother the fire, carelessly, when it leaps forth maddened by its check.

Slaughter-court! Slaughter-court! where man, made in God's own image, blurs and defiles that image—where the children that are born seem wanting in the babies' softened lineaments, as if Innocence had been taken away, and left the features hard and angular. Slaughter-court! where the sights seen daily should make even angels weep. Neglect, poverty, misery, vice, disease, all fever fires, fanned by the wings of the ghost from the grating.

AMONGST THE BEGGARS.

"POOR creatures!" said some one, with a sigh. "Ah! it's very dreadful."

But what is very dreadful?

Why, to be reduced to beggary, and to keep in that state of reduction from year to year, and seem to admire the practice.

Ah! my sympathetic friend, poverty is a sad thing. Stir up your matutinal coffee, break the new-laid, open that fresh pot from Crosse & Blackwell's, or that *paté* from

Fortnum's, or find fault with that last saucisson of Morel's, and then sigh over the account in the *Morning Magnetizer* of the poor woman—the match-box maker—dying literally from want of the commonest necessities of life: literally starving to death. And then you sigh again, and take a little more sugar; and the account being almost too affecting to read without blowing your nose a great many times over, you pass the paper to your vis-à-vis, the lady in morning dress, and she, too, sighs and says—

"Oh, Charles, how dreadful!"

And it is dreadful that, in the midst of our luxury and plenty, fellow-creatures should die of sheer want, with the fountain of life almost within their grasp. But it is so; and, perchance, wiser heads may devise plans for the relief of such cases, and their future prevention. For these are the real suffering poor—these who die at their post while slaving over some bitter task from week to week for a pittance, the greater part of which is grasped by the landlord who owns their wretched room—attic—cellar—in which they exist. There's a dark curtain hanging over a large portion of London life which some unusually rough blast blows a little on one side occasionally, and then the sickening spectacle that is revealed would almost make the angels weep. Hard, hard, hard—yes, bitterly hard that the willing hands and toiling brains should not be worthy of their hire, but sink at last stricken in the battle of life, with their warfare weapon grasped; and then the inquest—the light burden borne away—and as conclusion to "a life of want, a pauper's grave; the world would give no more." The curtain falls again; and as it resumes its shape, and the black folds hang motionless, we feel that something needs doing to aid our poor; and then we make up our mind to have a glance at some of the poor we know in Oxford and Regent streets.

However, it is no use to go too soon; better wait until two or three o'clock, and then we shall see them in force. We often see people hand out little packets of halfpence from carriage windows—small change which they have received after making the last purchase; and as there seems to be something more substantial in covering up charity beneath this fine cloak, and handing over the heavy bronzes, than giving a three-penny or fourpenny piece—a coin which

always makes the donor blush for its insignificance—we get two or three shillings' worth of halfpence; and stealing a few squares of curling paper from a sacred toilet table, wrap up packets of two, three, and fourpence, ready to bestow upon objects who may seem worthy of charity—the heavier packets to the seemingly most needy.

Luncheon passed, off we sally with the lumpy cash banging about our legs, and every now and then giving a bruise-threatening thump, and producing some slight feeling of irritation within at being cumbered in so unpleasant a fashion. The more need to rid one's self of the burden? Just so; but we do not get rid of it, for, with a solitary exception, we bring it all back again; not even making a gift to the crossing sweeper at the Circus, for as we passed he pocketed a sixpence for guarding a lady to a 'bus, and therefore his five minutes' work was well paid upon that occasion.

Into the crowd at once, and along by the shops and shoppers. What have we here—a widow? Poor thing, carrying a baby and leading one child, while a third, a step higher, clings to her skirt. How clean and neat they look! washed out, 'tis true, but no rags; everything patched and darned; hair smooth; and—there, one can't help blowing one's nose very hard and thinking what a comfort it is that one's life is well assured in the Red Breasted Pelican Widow and Orphans' Company. Poor things! Can't give them coppers, even wrapped up in paper; and there's that blue ruffian of the X Y division coming up, and the poor creature has moved off from that carriage door, while the constable has had the abominable audacity to wink at me. I should most certainly resent it if I were not engaged in a computation of the possibility of the widow's baby keeping the same size for four or five years, and children getting no bigger; for it must be the above space of time since I saw the lone widow selling matches.

Ah, well, perhaps she was an impostor; but this poor fellow, sans legs, crawling along upon two stumpy stools, and looking as though half his body were in the grave. "Get's a good living, and saves money!" Tut, tut, tut. Oh, the credulity of the British public!

There is something very attractive in the streets on a fine day. The shops newly

embellished, and the brightest and bravest goods are displayed in the windows. But there's a blind man. What a sad sight! Poor fellow. What a blessing it is to be able to see the brightness of this glorious day, whilst yon poor object is led by a dog—the highest of the creation depending on a poor four-footed beast. No—impossible! "Not blind with both eyes? Saves money, gets drunk, and beats his wife?" Where is a frail mortal to obtain a sufficient amount of credence to believe such a tale? Why, people must be throwing away their alms, and depriving the really necessitous of the aid they require.

And it is so. Real indigence starves in her garret; works her fingers to the bone, asking nothing but work, and reasonable pay for it. But, alas! too often the work is not to be obtained; and even when it is, receives such wretched recompense for the long hours of toil, that life cannot be supported upon the proceeds. Willing hands, willing hearts, and courage to fight in the battle of life: surely such attributes as these should be sufficient! But no; in our crowded cities there is always a struggle going on for the famine-craved loaf; and the weakest are pushed to the wall, to sink fainting as they see it carried off. Besides which, there exists a grasping, avaricious class, eager to take advantage of their fellow-creatures' infirmities; and they fatten upon their sufferings by withholding a fair day's pay for a fair day's work—by creating a competition amongst the famishing wretches until some gaunt, hollow-eyed sufferer snatches greedily at the coveted work. Only give it to her, and she will do it for less than any one else—only let her be earning something for the starving ones at home.

"There's nothing like competition, gentlemen, nothing like it. You get your shirts and clothes at an extraordinarily cheap rate; and we manufacturers drink champagne."

While the workers?

Ah, let's draw the curtain before them, and revenons à nos black sheep.

Look at the flower-girl, pressing her fragrant wares at that carriage window until a bunch or two are purchased. Well, there's nothing to find fault with there; it's an honest calling, even if it be so humble a one as hawking flowers through the streets. But stop a little, my friend, and come closer to the carriage as the marchande draws forth that dirty duplicate relating to the pawned flannel

under-garment, and importunes for money to release it from the custody of her "uncle."

And why not pity the poor creature who was compelled to borrow money upon her clothes? Because, my dear reader, she trades upon it; and in one day, thanks to the introduction by means of her lavender, violets, wallflowers, what not, she will gather enough money to redeem the prisoned article again and again, and still she goes on collecting day after day, week after week. That duplicate tale is a very old one; but it is unsuccessful this time, for the carriage window is drawn up, and the sweet flower-girl, with the flattened bonnet, indulges in a grinning grimace of disappointment at her late customers.

"Ah! signora—ah! bella signora; povero Italiano, signora," and so on, whines the little dormouse, guinea pig, or marmot-bearing nuisance, with his shaggy brown hair, handsome face, and great, laughing, dark eyes. "Ah! signora," whines and cants the little scamp at every carriage door, and goes home at night, heavy with coppers, to the rapacious Fagin-like swindler who sends him and the whole tribe of hurdy-gurdyists, organ-grinders, and the rest of the London musical nuisances, into our streets.

Begging—through foolish benevolence or foolish weakness, shown in paying black mail to get rid of the importunate one—has grown to be a most paying trade in spite of police regulations—which have, however, relieved us from the displays of bad hands and arms, produced by boiling pitch during a harrowing escape from a ship on fire. Most incurable wounds these were; keeping bad year after year, and proving the source of no mean revenue to the poor sufferer. Withered arms, too, have grown scarcer—arms tightly swathed from elbow to wrist in white bandages—regular copper-shower-producing clouds over the sufferer's life; and these sad limbs, too, always preserved their happy state of medium—never better, never worse. A leg lost in a coal pit accident, or a pleasant machinery mutilation, which can by any stretch be attributed to a late event current in the weekly papers, is as good as a mine to the stricken sufferer. Distress in the mining districts is a perfect harvest time; and unfortunate north countrymen, with East London dialects, and very doubtful ideas of the geography of their adopted district, are to be found here, there, everywhere. And—but I'm off into a long train

of musing, and here's one of my old friends coming. "I am paralyzed," says the inscription upon his breast; and yet he keeps performing that exquisitely unnatural St. Vitus's dance of his with redoubled fury as soon as a carriage approaches; and, as a natural sequence, a packet of small change rewards his industry; and industrious he must be, for it looks to be hard work to keep up that jig-jigging motion of all the muscles at once.

And now, who's this—the tall, blind gentleman in black, with the matches for sale? He looks so eminently respectable that it would be almost an insult to offer him coppers. And here, too, is our old friend with the white robes and bewitching smile, with his packets of patchouli for sale; and, somehow or other, his trade does not seem to be flourishing any more than that of his compatriots, the crossing sweepers. Had the Indian mutiny anything to do with the falling off? and do thoughts of infants writhing upon bayonets cross the minds of those who were wont to be charitable?

But here is a side street in a busy part, and we shall find ballad singers of some class or another. Walworth is one of the best places for this style of minstrelsy, for there, on busy nights, may be heard the beautiful chorus of "All the way from Manchester, and got no worhurk to do-o-o-o!" But that is quite a gaslight affair, and here in this Fitzregal region it is bright sunshine. Here we are—papa, mamma, and seven sweet babes; some, however, rather long, dirty, and straggley. How well and dirty they all look; and how naturally and gracefully each head turns to scan the upper windows, and cast sweet sounds aloft? Yes—no—yes, it is—no, it isn't—no, it is *not* the same fiddle, for this one is certainly redder and commoner. Now, then, two more lines of a hymn given out by papa, after wiping his nose with his white apron; tune, Ararat; and then, scrape fiddle, yell youngsters. I'm off, for the wind must be in the east, and I must go home, to invent a Jarndyce Growlery.

Here have I been for two hours carrying about a pocketful of halfpence, and not one case of real distress, so far as appearances went. But, stay; who is this crawling out of the slop shop with a roll of work under her arm?—haggard, sallow, and blood-shot eyes, as though with late hours' overwork. That hacking cough sends a cold

shudder through one's frame; and—there, I can't offer this poor creature halfpence—there—I don't want thanks.

I've turned the corner; but stay, let me see where she goes. I may be of further use to her; for what is a solitary coin to the adversity her appearance bespeaks? There, she enters that house. I'll follow and see what it is. Yes, just so. I can easily peer through these ajar doors that swing so lightly. Hum! There she stands, tossing down half a quarter of gin, while her left hand is busy picking up the change from my shilling!

Ah, well, she did not ask for it!

"The poor shall never cease out of your land." Let us give, then, to the truly poor—to the suffering and needy. It is hard to distinguish between the good coin and the counterfeit; for the latter has all the vraisemblance of the real, while often the ill-used genuine piece has the look of the counterfeit. There are thousands suffering—suffering a martyrdom in silence; weeping blinding tears for their wretched fate; and too diffident—too proud—to parade their indigence before their fellow-man's eyes: wretched beings, wanting the very fuel to keep alive the spark of life, and driven to despair and death for the lack of a bare crust; and, at the same time, thousands are revelling upon the produce of chicanery and deceit. A family might be reduced to beggary for a time; but no honest man would take to begging as a trade; and yet how many faces do we recognise year after year in our own streets!

There is in our midst a perfect mountain of poverty and misery—indigence that calls for the hand of charity to assuage its pangs; but, as I am a true prophet, the mountain will not come to me, I must go to the mountain; for your real sufferer must be sought out from the cave of despair lying at that mountain's foot.

A WOMAN'S WISH.

CHAPTER I.

THE great, clumsy five-barred gate leading to Sheephatch Farm stands in one of the prettiest bits of rural scenery—and there are many—about our town of Haselea. It is there that two roads meet—the one that winds gently down from the mound on which the old castle is built, and the steeper track that climbs the hills, sheltering the

town—hills whose sides are green in summer with hops, the staple produce of the district.

The gate of Sheephatch opens into a narrow lane, odorous in its season of the wild flowers gemming bank and hedge, and shadowed by huge elms and tall thickets, the haunt of countless song birds. This lane, once dignified by the name of the Avenue, is the principal route to the farmhouse, an ancient structure, so overgrown with small-leaved ivy that even the huge stacks of chimneys were garlanded with its tendrils. There is an air of comfortable solidity and quaintness about the edifice, as if its possessors prided themselves on keeping it in thorough repair, but, at the same time, revered the traditions of the past too much to disfigure it with modern innovations. Sheephatch, with its broad pasture lands beside the Wey, its productive corn fields and hop grounds, has been tenanted by the same family for nearly two centuries; and well may they love the old farmhouse, for it is a pleasant dwelling, rising, as it does, from the centre of an orchard-like garden, with the only unsightly erections about it—the drying kilns—concealed by the row of tall poplars skirting the cool, clear pond, in which the ducks splash, and startle the huge pike hiding beneath the water lilies in the farther corner.

Never did the quiet scene look fairer than on the sunny evening when Elsie Vere first beheld it. The hum of labour was over; the white roads were undotted by horse or waggon, and not a sound rose above the whispering of the southern wind in the elms. She sat on the rough foot-stile beside the gate, her face looking very pale and pure beneath the little crape bonnet that told of a recent bereavement, her spirits soothed by a repose and beauty strangely impressive to one who had never quitted London until that day.

And this grey old house, rising above a sea of verdure, had been the home of Elsie's mother from her birth to the time when she married and quitted it; keeping up for awhile an affectionate intercourse with its inmates—an intercourse gradually dropped as one after another died or left the neighbourhood, leaving at last only the widow and children of the eldest son within its walls.

What a contrast Sheephatch Farm presented to the dingy, smoky street in which

Elsie's young life had been passed, and where she had helped to nurse her father when a long and, in the end, fatal illness prostrated him! It must have been of these green hills and the landscape they embosomed that her mother had been thinking, when the bitter cry escaped her—"If we could but have taken him away from here he might have been spared to us a little longer." It was to this tranquil spot that in her widowhood and destitution she had hastened for comfort and assistance. Would she receive either?

This was the question in Elsie's thoughts as she sat on the stile, resting after the long railway journey and dusty walk from the Haselea Station. Her mother had talked hopefully enough till they drew near the farm; but then it was evident that doubts began to assail her.

"If poor Godfrey were alive there would be the heartiest of welcomes for us. I was always his favourite sister, and he never turned the needy from his door; but I don't know much of his wife. She brought him some money, and they used to say she was proud. I think I'd rather see her alone, Elsie dear. You shall wait for me at the gate."

Elsie had remonstrated, but in vain. The widow was resolute in her determination to spare her daughter the pain which would result from averted looks and an ungracious reception; so the girl sat on the stile, with her hands crossed in her lap, and the blue eyes which had grown so used to weeping filling with fresh tears as she watched the last gleams of sunlight fading in the west, and thought of the dear father whose last breath had been sighed away when the twilight fell—tears which ceased as she remembered that his new home must be radiant with a golden glory far surpassing this on which she gazed.

She did not hear the approach of the horseman who came leisurely up the road from the town, and made for the gate by which she was seated—no, not until the horse's head nearly touched her shoulder; and she sprang down from her perch with such a frightened face that the rider smiled, even while he dismounted and hastened to reassure her.

He was a tall, sensible-looking young fellow, not handsome, but with a mouth kind yet resolute, a well-shaped nose, a broad brow, and eyes which looked at you

so frankly and pleasantly that Elsie's terrors vanished as she listened to his assurances that Brownie was perfectly harmless, and his apologies for the alarm he had given her.

Unhasping the gate, he let the horse pass through, and the dumb animal took its way down the lane, pausing now and then to nibble a tuft of sweet grass; but his owner lingered beside Elsie. He saw that she was a stranger, and her mourning dress and youth caused his voice to take its softest tone as he addressed her.

"Are you going to the house? It is getting late for you to be here alone."

Elsie cast a startled glance around her.

"Is there any danger? I have not seen a single person since I have been here."

"No other danger than that the roads are lonely if you have far to go."

Elsie had not the courage to express her belief that she was speaking to that Walter Norris of whom she had heard as her aunt's only son and the master of Sheep-hatch; but simply said,

"I am waiting for my mother."

And the young man, with a civil, "Then I'll wish you good evening," strolled on in the wake of his horse.

He took the back way into the house, first overseeing the careful grooming of Brownie, and stopping in the yard to discuss some agricultural question with Luke Warner, his head man, and speaking a few cheery words to Luke's idiot boy, who was hanging about his father, waiting for the ride home on his back, which was one of poor Davy's greatest treats. When the pair had gone off together—Davy's pockets full of the early apples "the master" had gathered for him—Walter went in-doors, and found his mother sitting in her accustomed seat beside the tea table, knitting by the soft light of the moon rays that were stealing through the opposite window.

Mrs. Norris rejoiced in the name of an excellent woman. Her conduct in her wifehood had been unimpeachable, and she was an affectionate, though somewhat capricious, mother. But, most of all, she prided herself on her domestic management. Nowhere could such butter be procured as at Sheep-hatch, or such bread—light, crispy, and sweet—or such home-cured bacon. Neatness and thrift, without niggardliness, reigned under her jurisdiction; and the ladies of

Haselea were always glad to secure servants who had learned their duties under the eye of Mrs. Norris. Week in, week out, the work at Sheephatch went on with the same precision; the mistress lending the help of her own hands in everything, and secretly glorifying herself as she saw how the farm prospered and the golden store in the Haselea bank gradually increased from the nest-egg of a few pounds into hundreds.

Mrs. Norris told herself and her neighbours that she was a God-fearing woman. No idle hours in bed were allowed to her maids on Sunday morning, but punctually as the bells began to chime they quitted the house—the last one locking the door—and wended their way to church. After service Mrs. Norris sat grimly erect in her arm-chair, the family Bible open before her, and a white handkerchief carefully spread over her cap lest dust or fly should settle upon and soil it.

In this stately fashion she sat, watching and animadverting upon the frivolity of her maids, their ribbons, and their brooches; or listening to the gossip of some acquaintance, who was glad to barter her scandalous chronicles for the fresh air and luxurious tea-table of the farmhouse.

In her heart Mrs. Norris considered Sunday a dull day, and longed for the coming of the morning, and freedom to resume the labours in which she delighted; and though she would have been horrified had any one dared to break through the rules she prescribed for the observance of the Sabbath, it is doubtful whether she ever kept it herself in the truest acceptance of the word.

"Your father's sister Mary has been here," she said to her son, as he sat near her drinking his tea, and wishing he had the same latitude allowed him as his friend, the Haselea doctor, whose little wife permitted him to digest the newspaper with his bread and butter, unchidden.

"Been here? What, lately? Within the hour?" he began to question, with awakening interest. "Was it her daughter I found at the gate? A pretty, fair-haired girl about eighteen?"

"I'm sure I don't know, Walter," his mother replied, in aggrieved tones. "I've always tried to do my duty by your father's family, and if Mrs. Vere had written to say that a little help would be acceptable, I'd have been agreeable to your sending up a

hamper now and then. But when people come and boldly try to quarter themselves upon us altogether, it's more than I can submit to."

"Are you quite sure you understood Mrs. Vere rightly?" asked the young farmer, after pondering awhile, and striving to connect the refined, modest girl he had encountered with the importunate widow his mother described.

"Of course she did not say downright, 'Take me in and keep me,' but she let me see her meaning plain enough. It was a folly—and so I told her—to leave a great city like London and come here. She said her daughter was delicate, and that a dread hung over her that the girl would die as her father had done, if she did not remove her; but in my opinion it's very wrong to give way to such fancies, and you may be sure I didn't encourage her in them."

"You haven't let Mrs. Vere go away, have you, mother?" Walter stayed the current of her eloquence to inquire; and Mrs. Norris put down the sugar basin with a clouded brow.

"Now, Walter, what could I do with a woman who don't seem as if she cared to put her hand to anything, and a girl that's been brought up in positive idleness? Because Robert Vere was improvident, is it any reason that I should be burdened with his widow and daughter?"

"But they're in trouble, mother; and where should they go if not to their nearest of kin?"

And Walter rose, and walked towards the door.

"If it were only from respect to my father's memory, I'd not let his sister be turned from our door in this way. I shall follow her, and learn in what way I can serve her."

When Walter was really angry his mother generally subsided into silence; but a chance word thoughtlessly spoken by her widowed sister-in-law—a loving allusion to the beauty and sweet temper of Elsie—had roused within her a jealous suspicion, and she was determined to thwart any schemes that might be in petto for her son's enthrallment.

"You may sit down again," she said coldly; "I'm not generally so uncharitable as to warrant the harsh construction you have chosen to put upon my conduct. I did not send Mrs. Vere away empty-handed."

Nancy Trusler has had an empty room ever since the Scripture reader went away; she will give Mary and her daughter a bed to-night; and to-morrow, if they are wise, they will go back to London."

TABLE TALK.

THE following is supposed to be the origin of nightmare. It is from Laing's "Chronicles of the Kings of Norway":—"Vailaud, who ruled over the Upsal domain, was bewitched by the elf Mara. He became drowsy, and laid himself down to sleep; but when he had slept but a little while, he cried out saying that Mara was treading upon him; but when they took hold of his head she trod upon his legs, and when they laid hold of his legs she pressed upon his head, and it was the death of him."

THE FOLLOWING ANECDOTE is told of Dr. Taylor, pastor of the Broadway Tabernacle:—"Before the changes which have been wrought during the summer and fall in the interior of the church were completed, Dr. Taylor was one day standing in the edifice, talking with an "artist in fresco," who was eagerly endeavouring to enlist the pastor's interest in his own plans for wall decoration. "Here," said the man of colours, pointing to a prominent part of the wall, "I thought it would be a good plan to put some illustrations of the life of Christ." "No," rejoined Dr. Taylor; "it's *my* business to illustrate Christ's life in the pulpit. You've nothing to do with that." "H'm!" continued the persevering artist, pointing to another part of the interior; "don't you think some crosses would look well painted there?" "No," replied the doctor; "I've crosses enough already in my lot. I pray you don't give me any more." "Well," sighed the rather disappointed artist, disposed to think that frescoing found little favour in that particular quarter, "what *would* you like?" "I should like to have you get out of this place as soon as you can, and let me get in," was the doctor's quick reply, the fun in his face showing easily what he meant by it.

WE HAVE OUR OWN difficulties abroad; but those of the intelligent foreigner here must be something startling. In money matters, the map-like lines of our mazy streets, and

our insular pronunciation, he must, as a matter of course, be puzzled. Bradshaw's Guide, too, must inflict its pains; but what he makes of the names bawled out by sthenic-lunged porters at our various railway stations some travel-publishing French editor may tell us in the future. The street vendor of old justified his clipping of the Queen's English upon the score of the immense number of times he repeated a word; but railway porters, though called upon frequently to announce the name of the stopping station, have not so great a demand upon their vocal powers but that they might enumerate distinctly their words for the benefit of untravelled travellers. What person, missing the by no means too plain by day, invisible by night, board, would alight at Ponder's End upon hearing a stout porter roar with all his might "Zend, Zend"? Cheshunt is badly represented by "Sunt, Sunt, Sunt;" but upon every railway the rule seems to be the making of proper names improper—chipping, clipping, mutilating—with one exception, where the name is so short that further alteration in that direction would be annihilating. Here, then, the ingenuity of the porter is displayed; for in the place of chipping he multiplies, and the stranger hunts in vain in his guide for a suburb of London called "Bo-bo-bo-bow."

REPORT SAYS that the French Post Office authorities have obtained a stamp-cancelling ink which is absolutely indelible. Great losses have been experienced in the department for want of such a preparation.

MEANDERING IS SAID to be derived from the river Meander, which led those who rowed upon its placid bosom through many devious ways and wanderings, frequently almost doubling upon itself.

Communications to the Editor should be addressed to the Office, 19, Tavistock-street, Covent-garden, W. C.

Contributions should be legibly written, and only on one side of each leaf.

All Contributions are attentively considered, and unaccepted MSS. are returned on receipt of stamps for postage; but the Editor cannot hold himself responsible for any accidental loss. No unaccepted MSS. will be returned until a written application has been made for them.

Terms of Subscription to ONCE A WEEK, free by post:—Weekly Numbers for Six Months, 5s. 5d.; Monthly Parts, 5s. 8d.

ONCE A WEEK

NEW SERIES.

No. 347.

August 22, 1874.

Price 2d.

JACK'S SISTER; OR, WOMANLY PAST QUESTION.

CHAPTER XLII.
AT REST.



HE end was drawing near now. It was a week since Enid had left the sunny fields and willow-bedded river of her childhood's home, and every day the fever seemed to lose in intensity, the fits of insensibility to grow in length and deathliness. Poor Enid was looking white and thin herself—very unlike the girl whom Merle had asked to be his wife among the golden autumn leaves; but she kept up her strength bravely, and only thought of the green woods and dripping rushes with a sad yearning that Merle were there, to die—since he must die—among leaves and flowers, and the pure, sweet surroundings of his country home.

It had been a weary, very weary, and anxious day. She had not even been able to leave the sick room once, so piteous was the restlessness of that shattered frame, worn to skin and bone, and the faint moanings from those pale, parched lips. Now and then he had seemed to recognize and try to speak to her; then fainting came on, ending finally in a sort of sleep, so deathly that she sent in terror for the doctor; and

it needed all her courage and nerve to bear the smothered whispers and head-shakings of nurse and landlady.

"Only a few hours more. Can't see another night through, poor dear!" &c.

"Go away, please," Enid said, at last. "He does not want anything now."

And then she took the poor head in her arms, and bowed her own above it; trying to pray that God would end this pain quickly, and give the sufferer rest, even in death, if other might not be.

"Enid!"

It did not sound like the same voice which had uttered her name in meaningless ravings day after day. This was spoken so low that it had never reached the ears without the heart had heard as well. Lifting her face with an almost faint agony of hope, she met his eyes, no longer fixed and wild, but gazing up wistfully into hers.

"Really you?"

He had no strength to say more—no strength even to hear the answer, till she had raised his head, and moistened his lips again and again with the cordial, always ready. That seemed to pull him back from the dead faintness into which he was sinking. His eyes opened again, unnaturally large and dark, gleaming like big, black stars out of his white face; and his fingers closed on hers as he said, half wonderingly:

"Enid, did you come to me?"

"Yes, darling, of course. You wanted me, you know."

How hard it was to force the trembling voice to that sweet, steady tone, sounding even cheerful enough to bring another train of thought to the weak brain. His eyes looked beyond her in baffled questioning.

"This—is not—home, is it?"

"No, dear, we could not move you; you were not strong enough."

It was a proof of how near death he was that the old, unthinking selfishness seemed blotted out. His face wore a troubled

look, and his next words were spoken anxiously—

"No one with you! You ought not—such a place."

"Yes, dearest," she said, with quick, glad recognition of his unwonted care for her. "Nurse is here, taking care of us both. Don't think of anything now, dear Merle, only rest."

And, indeed, he was not capable of anything else. The haggard eyes closed wearily upon her smile. The weak fingers fastened upon the frill of her dress; and with that feeble hold on the one strand of life which still held by him, Merle sank into a deep sleep, the first natural sleep in all those one and twenty days.

How long it lasted Enid did not know. Some one—the nurse—looked in; and, being made to understand by a sign what had happened, hurried away. Some one else came behind her, touched the thin, white wrist upon the bed-clothes, lifted the damp curls falling on her breast, and moved aside with a low, muttered word—

"Another hour—not more."

Other murmurs came from time to time, dropping like dream voices on her ear—

"Will kill her"—"And kneeling so ever since daylight"—"A glass of wine?"—"Most likely he will never wake!"—"No, give her a spoonful of brandy."

But though the sound reached her hearing, the sense never stirred her brain; and though she shook her head when some one put a wine-glass to her lips, she hardly knew what it meant or what was offered. One only feeling, one only sense, filled her heart and soul to overflowing, and swept the world away.

Merle!

Her charge, her darling, the idol of her life—the weak, wayward, passionate boy whose love for her had been the one bright gem in his wasted life—dying, dying, dying in her arms—fading away into the unknown void, drifting out into the vast sea of eternity, where—oh, God! oh, God!—her love was of no avail to reach him any more.

"Christ love him—Christ keep him!" her heart kept crying, over and over again. "Oh! Lord Christ, be good to him—my Merle—my poor boy! Lord, Lord, I tried to do my best; do Thou the rest. Take him in Thine arms when mine must let him go. Pity him—keep him! I can do no more, no more now; but lay him at Thy

feet—his Saviour's and mine, our Shepherd and our Lord!"

So, in solemn silence, the full heart breaking at last in passionate pleadings—in hot, fast-raining tears above the white, wan face, and eyes hollowed under the awful hand of death.

He had waked at last, but she did not know it; for he never moved or spoke, but lay there, his eyes hidden against the heart which had beat so long, and was bleeding now for him alone. God only knows, not I, nor she, nor any other, what passed within his mind in that brief pause outside the gates of death. Perhaps his short life, so rich with promise and talent, so wonderfully blessed with a love beyond all desert, so utterly poured to waste upon the barren sands, rose up before him, threatening him with a ghastly finger of rebuke. Perhaps the earthly love, so strong through all his faults, swept every other sin away before that last betrayal; or perhaps even love itself faded before the vision of "the Son of Man coming in splendour to judge." God knows! Vain now the weak remorse—vain, worse than vain, the weaker resolutions; and in the anguish of his spirit, Merle turned his face and groaned—

"Too late! Too late!"

The sweet eyes met him straight—liquid with tears, but soft with steady, tender confidence.

"No, love, never too late! They are waiting for you now. My mother and yours, and God, our loving God!"

He listened, drinking in her tender voice and look with hungry eyes. The passion of his life rose up, and went out in one sharp cry—

"Oh! Enid, keep me! You left me once; and it has come to this! Don't let me go. For God's sake, darling, don't let me go again!"

If words can stab, those words, "You left me once," pierced Enid's heart with a pain beyond all else; and yet, how tell a dying man that she had never left him till he put her from him?

"It is for God's sake, darling. He loves you even better. He knows I am not strong enough to keep you, and so He is taking you before. Oh, Merle!"—and the low voice shook and broke—"better so than that you should drift away from both of us."

"As I have," he muttered, bitterly.

"Only a little way. Christ followed, Christ saved you. Yes, and sent me here to nurse you till—"

"The end!"

It was he who said it, not Enid. A grey shadow was creeping over his face, a strange calm upon his soul. Some one entered the room—the clergyman Enid had sent for when consciousness first revived; and to him Merle spoke, a light upon his face, a sweet, stern sorrow in his voice—

"Pray for me. I have sinned."

And while the grey-haired minister lifted up his voice to the God who died for sinners, Merle lay back, so white, so still, that Enid, praying too, only knew by the motion of his lips and the quiver in his tight-clasped hands that death had not snatched him away from prayer and penitence alike.

The last rites were over, and the clergyman had gone before he opened his eyes, with a sudden, wistful yearning—

"Enid, Enid, you *do* forgive me?"

"My darling, have I not? You hurt yourself, my poor Merle, more than me!"

"Yes," he said, and over his face there passed the shadow of a bitter pang—the final one on earth. "Yes, thank God, though I have wrung your heart, and wasted your life, my love, my own, it has not hurt you as it might—as it would have done if you had ever loved me in the way that I would so fain have had you—my way."

His lips were tightly compressed, and she could not answer. Her whole soul and body were shaking with the sorrow which might not comfort here. God, the pitiful, looked down, and laid His hands on this last sob of earth; and Merle, strong in the hands of death, feeling the woman whom he loved weaker than himself for once, took her face within his dying hands, and spoke fondly, even brightly—

"My darling, I am glad. Your life may mend itself now. It could not then. Enid, my love, my little sister—never my wife, thank God, thank God! Kiss me once again, only once. So. Thanks—thanks for all. Christ bless and reward my little woman—my saint!"

It was all over, all over and ended. The sunset faded out; the moon rose up, white and misty, parting the curtains with a solemn finger, and falling like a robe of light across the narrow bed. Outside, the roar and roll

of the city waxed faint and fainter, and died away. The river rushed on beneath black arches, and blacker, murder-bent faces. The wind moaned and the rain fell; but in one room all was still, all peace and silence. For Merle was gone, and Enid knelt on, her cheek against a cheek of ice—her work all ended, her heart alone at last.

What could she do for him now? He had sinned, and he had repented. Both alike were finished at present. The praises of the bad, the sorrow of the good, even the petty sneers and triumphings of the self-righteous Pharisees of this world, could wake no answering pulse now in that white and rigid form. God the Father, infinitely just and infinitely loving, had taken into his own hands the weak will and passionate nature; and before that throne, who amongst you who judged him in life will dare stand forward and cast the first stone?

And his cousin?

How long she knelt there she never knew.

It was nearly dawn before stealthy steps came in; and amid murmurs of awe and pity she was led away, not resisting, but with feeble steps, and dim, unseeing eyes, to her own room. There Alice undressed her, and laid her in bed. She never spoke, or seemed to hear the old woman's fondling words of affection; and almost as soon as her head was on the pillow, her eyes closed in the sleep of utter exhaustion. Body and mind alike were worn out.

She must have slept several hours; for it was nearly noon, and the last offices for the dead had been all performed before she again entered the silent room where the white face lay back, still and fair, with a beauty it had never known in life, an unutterable calm which struck to the girl's heart with a new pain. It was so unlike himself: so strange as almost to frighten her. For the first time she felt that she had *lost* "her boy." Before, it had been only that he was at rest, and out of suffering. Now, all at once, he seemed gone—taken up into a sphere where her gaze was utterly unavailing to reach him. Upon the closed eyes was fixed a stamp which said, in solemn accents, "I know;" and yet she could not grieve, when knowledge meant peace, peace which life had never brought. She could not grieve as those grieve who would fain recall the lost ones. There are wrongs which a woman can forgive lovingly and entirely; but which only the merciful hand

of death can blot out in perfect oblivion—cases where that and that alone can restore the erring one to exactly his old place; and this was one of them. Love can exist after respect, and even liking, is gone; but it is a love that is born of pity, and fed with pain—pain to the giver and receiver. Enid could not wish, dear as he was to her, that he had lived for that—lived, perhaps, only to fall again, and yet deeper. She knew only too well that their old familiar confidence and intimacy could never have been quite the same after what had been; and yet that the consciousness of a change, however unspoken and well hidden, would have been a constant and never dying pang to each.

It was well for him to die; and she felt it—could give him trustingly into the hands of a merciful Father, and say, "Thy will be done," without a murmur. But now that he was gone, and she left all alone, with no one to work for, no one to torment her, her very heart seemed to die beneath the terrible sense of desolation entailed.

Say what we will about the natural clinging of a woman to some stronger nature, and the beauty of that graceful dependence on mankind which is never more fully exemplified than in gentle, home-bred women of Enid Leyburn's type, there is yet an inborn spring of maternity in almost every female heart—from the little girl of five, who hushes her doll to sleep, to the old maid fussing over her sick kitten—which makes the sense of being leant on, and clung to for support, not only natural and proper, but a most intense and vivid pleasure to all womanly women; and causes the breaking of that bond to be a deep and positive pain.

It was this pain that Enid was suffering from now. All his life Merle had wanted her, depended on her, called on her counsel for assistance and her love for support. She could hardly imagine him living, and yet separated from her; and yet, though this very feeling, had they been married, might have cast a shadow over her life, as depriving her of that sacred right of womanly dependence upon the husband who is by nature ordained to be her staff and head; yet now that he was gone she began to realize that she was indeed alone, and to feel as if no one needed or required her in the world. It was a morbid fancy, and perhaps Miss Leyburn's rigour, and the not having heard from her brother, united with grief and

weariness in producing it. At any rate, she resisted all Alice's entreaties to take food, to leave the room where duty had held her so long, or make arrangements for returning home, or even going into other apartments till the funeral; but sat still and silent beside the bed, her face hidden, and her fingers still clasping that clay-cold hand, which had so lately thrilled them by its burning touch.

The old nurse was getting positively uneasy; but, fortunately for both, rescue was near at hand even then, and even as Alice retired, worsted from a last attempt at moving her young mistress, she nearly tumbled over some one who was coming up stairs with hasty strides, and who caught her by the shoulders, with the exclamation—

"You here! Thank Heaven, then she isn't alone!"

"Master Jack! Oh, sir, I am glad!" began the old woman, but he did not wait to hear her; and the next moment Enid, who had been startled to the door of the inner room by the well-known voice, found herself lifted in two strong arms, and kissed with warm, brotherly fondness.

"My poor child!" cried Jack, pityingly, his voice hoarse with emotion. "To think of your being here with only Nurse! I had left Paris, so only got your letter yesterday; and though we travelled back in hot haste, I couldn't reach here before. Why, Enid! Hush, hush! Don't cry in that way. Don't, there's a dear, good girl! Has it been so very bad?"

For Enid had utterly broken down; and, clinging to his neck, was weeping like a little child. I believe those tears saved her reason; but Jack had never seen her give way so completely before, and was quite dismayed. It was many minutes before she was even able to sob out—

"Oh! Jack, you are not angry, then? Say you are not angry! I was so afraid you would be."

"Angry! Why, you poor little girl, what for? Coming to nurse that poor fellow? If you hadn't, I should have doubted its being you. There, now, don't cry"—and his own voice was husky as he glanced towards the half-open door of that darkened room within. "It's been too much for you, and a beastly shame of Aunt Jane to leave you alone; but I've sent Clif to engage rooms for the night at an hotel near, and

"I'll take you there at once. What! Stay here? Nonsense. Do you think I'd dream of letting you stop a moment longer, now the poor fellow doesn't want you? You look nearly dead as it is."

Most likely she did; but even in her faintness and agitation that word "Clif"—the name so sternly vetoed a while ago, and now uttered by the man who had forsworn it—and its owner with the old easy familiarity—struck on her senses with a dim sense of bewilderment. She half thought that she had fancied it; but at this moment the little maid appeared at the door with a message—

"A gentleman below astin for you, please, sir; an' says as how he's took the rooms, and there's a card of 'em, please, sir; an' can he be of any more use? He's got a four-wheeler outside."

"I'll speak to him," said Jack.

But Enid looked too shaken to be left. So, still holding her in his strong arm, he leaned over the balusters, and spoke in a subdued tone to some one whose dark, tall figure was dimly visible in the dusk below.

"Many thanks, old fellow. Let the cab wait. I must take her to the hotel, and come back here. Will you go with us?"

"Thanks, no—I'll wait here for you," answered a voice which made Enid start violently, and set her heart throbbing to the echoes of its old sweet ring. And then the figure went away into the twilight, and Jack sent for his sister's bonnet and shawl, and commenced muffling her up with an awkward goodwill which was better than many men's skill. Perhaps he expected some questioning, for he looked rather red and confused. But Enid's heart was still too heavy for fresh thought. The living might wait till a morrow—to-day belonged to the dead; and when she spoke, it was only to beg to be allowed to go in and see Merle once again—

"Only for a moment, Jack; but I can't go without bidding him good-bye."

"Don't stay, then, dear. Here, I will go with you."

"No, I would rather be alone. I won't be long. Indeed, I won't, Jack."

And she was not. It was only a last rain of kisses on the marble lips and brow, a last prayer, murmured through tears which fell too fast for sight; and then she came out, with her veil down, took her brother's arm, and left the house in silence. Out-

side, the other gentleman was waiting; but though he opened the cab door, and handed in Enid's shawl and bag, he did not speak, or attempt to approach her; and it was not for some hours after that she remembered his left arm had been bandaged, and in a sling.

They left London next day. On the following Saturday all there was left of poor Merle was to be brought down to Marston Fallows, and laid in the quiet cloister, by the side of the aunt who had been to him as a mother; and on the very spot where he had stood when he asked Enid to be his wife.

Long after she had gone to bed at the hotel, she heard Jack and that other voice in earnest conversation, and again in the morning her brother was called out to speak to a gentleman; but he made no more allusions to Clifton, and Enid asked nothing. It was only in the effort to rouse herself by talking that when they were in the train she said—

"Where did you hear that all was over, Jack? I noticed your hat had crape on it last night."

"Not till I inquired at the door. Crape? Oh, that was not—I put it on for her—Mrs. Gore."

He was looking away from his sister; but her cry of dismay made him turn, and he saw her face had turned as white as death.

"Baby!" she gasped.

"Yes. Hadn't you heard? It was in the *Times* and *Galignani*. Burnt to death the night I arrived in Paris. There, don't talk of it. It's too terrible; and you've had trouble enough. I don't know why I put the crape on, except—he's such a sensitive fellow, and I thought it might please him."

How like that brother and sister were, under the crust of mere externals, and how well they understood one another! Not one word Enid said, but she put her hand into Jack's, and she squeezed it hard, tears falling fast all the while. Jack patted the gentle hand kindly—

"Don't you cry for her, or me, my dear. She wasn't worth it, and I've had sense to find it out. We won't talk about her now she's gone."

And there was so much decision in his tone that, much as Enid wanted to hear, she asked no more.

Miss Leyburn met them at the hall door.

I think she had been privately regretting her rigour for some days past; for her welcome of Enid was unusually tender; and she took very meekly Jack's homily on the subject after his sister had gone upstairs. Not that he said much. Death is a great softener, and its radius is not so narrow but that Aunt Jane found herself within the boundary. Before the funeral was over, those three left at the Cedars had settled into the consciousness that each was softer, kinder, and more genial to the other than they had ever been before. Enid had lost her post of peacemaker, for peace reigned of itself. Merle's death had broken down the one web of difference between her and the others; and even Aunt Jane became something nearer and dearer from the day when her niece caught her brushing away a furtive tear as she turned from the portrait of that dark-eyed, wayward boy, whose home life she had not certainly contributed to make as happy as it might have been.

"You *are* sorry for him, Auntie!" Enid cried, putting her arm round the spinster with a warm impulse of kindredship which she had never felt before.

And Aunt Jane answered, with quite a new humbleness—

"I wish I had not been so sharp with him sometimes. Try and forget it now, Enid."

MY FISHERMAN.

WELL, as to that sing-song way of talking, we don't notice it, sir, being used to it like. Boats lost? No, very seldom; of course, such a thing has happened, but generally through bad seamanship. You see, we have our fathers' and grandfathers' experience to work on; and being at sea from children, I may say, we get to know every rock, and point, and sand, under water as well as above. Change in the weather or coming of wind we generally know. Now, for instance, last week you could see the Lizard lights from where we now are, which in a regular way you can't, because of the point of land. Well, that's what you call refraction, and we know it as a sign of wind in a day or so; and it's sure to come. Why, if we see a change coming in the weather, it's up nets, and we rattle them in over the roller at the boat's side in no time, and then make for port.

Ours is an awful coast, you know, to be

caught in a storm, and many's the fine ship I've seen go to pieces off here in the bay; some trying to fetch the harbour and not able. I've known the time, after a gale, when you might count six or eight wrecks from my door with a glass. But only take proper care, and with such boats as ours there's no danger, for they'll live through anything.

Nice lines, haven't they? Here we have everything a man can wish for in the cabin—sleeping berths for seven men, stove, lockers, oven behind stove for cooking, breaker for water, tubs for sugar and salt, and everything handy; while the boy keeps all neat and tidy. It would be worth your while to try a steak cooked by one of our men, you wouldn't find its equal anywhere. We mostly take out stores for a week, and of course live a good deal upon fish; for, you see, we don't want to be out long; what we want is to get our take, and run in again quickly and sell it; for of course stale fish isn't much account, and when we have no wind it bothers us both in coming in and putting out again. Sometimes, when we're fifty or sixty miles off the port, and taking very few fish, our boat will run in with four or five boats of mackerel or herring, as the case may be; but, mind you, we don't take herrings about Mount's Bay and the Land's End here, only mackerel and pilchards—a fish you London people won't have anything to do with. I suppose they're too strong and oily for you; but we do a tremendous trade in them, and when they are cured and packed in hogsheads, they are all bought by the Italian merchants for the Mediterranean trade, though it does seem a long way to take them. The oil from them is tremendously strong and rank, and some of our people would turn quite ill after eating pilchards; but I've seen the Italian merchants dip their fingers in the oil and taste it as if it was cream or milk.

That's a fine trade for us, the pilchard trade. About September you come here of a night, and see the bay quite alive with boats and lights, all the people busy enough about the nets, where they've got the fish enclosed, and dipping them out in baskets. Then ashore they're hard at work salting and packing them in bulk; and, one way and another, pilchards are very profitable to the fisherman. You see, there's the refuse salt, and the oil, and what we call the drug, all sell for something; and most of our cot-

tagers have what we call a fish cellar—that is, a place for packing and curing pilchards.

Some people have an idea that we catch fish in a net by getting them in it and lifting them out. Well, that's right enough in shallow water, fishing with what we call a trawl, which drags along the sandy bottom, and has a pocket net, in which we get soles, and plaice, and skate, and turbot, and brill—all sorts, you see. That's a trawler, fishing as she sails—nice bait for her to-day; we call wind *bait* in her case. That's her—that cutter-rigged boat with the white sails. And that idea of people's is right enough when we are using a seine, and surrounding fish in the bay; but our general way of taking shoal fish is with long drift nets, which we shoot over the sides, and a fleet of them will perhaps be a mile long. They are made on purpose for mackerel, herring, or pilchard, different sized meshes according to which we are fishing for, just big enough for the fish to run their heads through as they swim swiftly against the nets, which we leave laid right across their way, and then their gills prevent them from drawing their heads out again, and we can haul net and fish together into the boat.

Of course we lose a good many, which drop off as we are hauling in; but we get vast takes sometimes, and the nets are so much more manageable this way. It was a capital plan, whoever hit upon it first, but I dare say, like a good many more clever things, it was found out by accident. You know, the nets are all fastened to a long line kept afloat with corks, and the tops of the nets again are let down about twenty feet below the surface, so that if a ship comes sailing by, and crosses the fleet of nets, her keel will most likely pass over the line, and the nets escape, though we do lose them sometimes in spite of signals, and we keep a turpentine flambeau to light up on purpose. The nets themselves are about forty feet deep, with corks at their top edge, while they sink by their own weight, and, either across or with the tide, form a regular trap for the shoals of fish to dart against. If it's mackerel fishing, we take them out when in the boat; if herring, we shake them out; and if pilchard, we pick them out of the meshes.

We call making nets "breeding" them, and mending them "beating," and these jobs our wives do; but many of them we buy machine-made from Scotland. White

cotton is one of the best materials, after they have been well tanned with a gum we buy called gambier. But the preparing of the nets, fitting them on the lines, we do ourselves. "Craft" we call our nets.

I suppose it's from practice—the eye gets educated like; but when on the watch we fishermen can see land or a ship long before a landsman would; and we need have sharp eyes, for the lives of the crew and our living depend on the man at the look-out. We know generally where to shoot our nets by the colour of the water; but I have known the time when, as the tide washes by the nets, you may see them all like a trace-work of fire, and every ripple that broke against the boat all splashed-like with fire. It's no use fishing then, for the shoals won't come near the nets.

Of course we have plenty of drawbacks. Sometimes a net or two will be swept away by a ship—nets worth, perhaps, £4 a-piece; sometimes the wind's too high for us to shoot our nets; sometimes the dogs will come and bite out mackerel and piece of net and all—dogs, you know, a little kind of shark, from twenty to thirty inches long. But, mind you, before now we've brought in sharks six or seven feet long, besides all sorts of odd fish—cuttle, and jelly, and porpoise, and grampus.

I remember once that we were hauling in our nets with a tremendous good take of herrings, when down under our bottom there was a great fish came, longer than our boat. A tremendous fellow he was—a kind of whale, I should think; and as the herrings dropped by dozens from the nets, he kept playing about and catching them. Well, this was all very well at first, as long as we kept on drawing in net after net; but I began to be afraid that when the supply of fish ran short he might give us a stroke with his tail and send us over; so I began to think what was best to be done, for I felt a bit scared about the great fellow we could see so plainly down in the clear bright water.

I hit upon a plan at last, and when we had got nearly to the last net, and he must have had a pretty good feed—not that we missed it—I got one of our fellows at the pump, and he began to pump out the dirty, fishy, bilge-water from the bottom of the boat, so that it sullied and fouled the sea all about. My word, sir, it was like splashing dirty water upon a dandy; for by the time

the sea cleared again there wasn't a sign to be seen of our great visitor.

These are not sailors' yarns, sir, but facts. There's some tremendous fellows in the sea, I can tell you, and what I'm talking about are babies to them. Some years ago there was a fish here in Mount's Bay playing about for weeks, and we often saw him rolling out of the water like a porpoise; and one gentleman staying here tried again and again to get a shot at him. A playful fellow that was, but he did a deal of mischief—biting or breaking the small boats from their moorings out by the lugger buoys; but he went at last, and we saw no more of him.

Well, I suppose our Cornish fishermen are a respectable set of men. You see, they're religious after their fashion; and no man who thought anything of his character would think of putting to sea on Saturday night on account of Sunday. Saturday's the day to get home and dry the nets, and the rest does the men good, and the nets good, too, for they get well dried, and it makes them more durable. Many of our men are temperance men; and though it may seem unnecessary for a man to bind himself by an oath that he won't drink strong drink, and we may despise a man who can't keep sober without, yet you mustn't despise our Cornish temperance men, who are thoroughly worthy, straightforward fellows.

Wonderful tame the birds are. You see, we never molest them, for they're fishermen's friends—show us again and again where the fish are. It isn't lucky to hurt them. May be superstitious, but then people are that way disposed here, and believe in folks being "ill-wished," and so on. We've wise men—conjurers we call them here—come to remove the ill-wish; and they do it, too—at least, people say so. Do I believe it? Well, I don't think I do.

Nets and boats form our wealth here, sir—such wealth as we have; and I don't think you'll find a man that hasn't one or more nets of his own out in the fleet, on all of which he gets a certain profit; but we have many losses from them, and nets soon wear out. But we are proud of our boats, which are the fastest anywhere. I've known them sail twenty-three leagues—sixty-nine miles, you know—in a little over six hours. One of our boats costs from £250 to £300, according to the work in her; and of course it's many a man's ambition to own his boat

he sails in. You see, they are some of them quite decked, and the cabin is comfortable; but time back they were all open, and the men used to sleep of a night in great capes, with hoods to cover them well over.

Fond of my tobacco to chew? Well, I am, and it's been friend and comfort to me many a night far out at sea, when the wind's been cold and the sea high; and being a man who neither smokes nor drinks, I can't help having one little weakness. But we all have our weaknesses, and among us fishers the greatest is the desire to be first everywhere. Perhaps that's partly due to counting to get the first turn at the fish; but if you sail by one of our boats you can't offer the men a greater insult than that of holding them out a rope's end, as much as to say, "Shall we take you in tow, because you sail so slowly?" I remember once playing a foolhardy trick to get first into the bay round by the Land's End, and shoot amongst the pilchards. There was another boat close by us, and she tacked off the point, same as we ought to have done; but I saw that if I ran between a couple of rocks and over a shoal, where at that turn of the tide I supposed there would be just water to float us, I should save time and no end of distance, giving our boat the best chance at the fish. So I just said a few words to our lads as I stood at the helm, and without another word being spoken I ran down for the black, threatening-looking spot, where the waves were creaming up white all round, and where, if under the tall headland the wind had died away, we must have gone on the rocks, and had the boat stove to pieces. It was ticklish work, and when fair in for the risk I could feel the folly of what I had undertaken. I knew, too, every rock, and the depth they all were below water; and in the few minutes that sharp run lasted, first one and then another seemed to keep rising up through the clear water, and showing its green, craggy head to thrust a hole through the vessel's bottom. But I held on, and wouldn't even look at my lads who were with me, and standing in their places without moving, though I saw that more than one had taken hold of a rope or sheet, so as to have something to stay by when she bumped on the rocks, and one would be almost thrown off one's feet.

Nearer we went and nearer, and my breath seemed to catch, for the sail shivered as if about to flap for want of wind, when

she would have lost way directly, and we must have been on the rocks.

It was only a narrow opening, with very little to spare on either side; but I did not care for that, for she would answer to the helm as obedient as could be. I could manage to steer her clear if there was space enough beneath her keel, and as we came nearer, now for the first time the thought came home that there was not, and I felt the poor boat must go; for with the swell there is always there she would soon be knocked to pieces, while we should have enough to do to save ourselves by getting on to the rocks. Even the very gulls seemed to be swooping about and with their hoarse, mournful cries laughing at us, while a couple of sooty shags swept by our bows.

"Now for it!" I muttered to myself as we raced down, and for a moment I was ready to leave the rudder and jump overboard and swim for my life; but I did not, for I could never have forgiven myself the disgrace if I had forsaken my post; and the next moment our boat rose on a wave and rode as it were right on the top of it, clean through the gap between the rocks, and then leaped again through the water as if rejoicing at her escape, and shook the spray from her bows; whilst it's my firm belief that if we had tried the passage just before or after a wave was washing through, we must have struck.

Ah, it was a foolhardy trick; but we were well in the bay, and first by a long while; and I believe that was the best haul of pilchards we ever had.

OLD FASHIONS.

BY AN OLD WRITER.

IN this cold country, in the time of Severus, the most northern Britons were entirely without clothing, and to this they were hardened by use.

A part, however, of the inhabitants had better covering, and were attired with skins; and after, as civility grew under the Romans, they assumed the Roman habit.

The English, at the first arrival of the Romans here, used long jackets, and were shaved on the head, saving about the crown. After, they wore loose and large white garments, with broad lace of divers colours, as the Lombards. Somewhat before the Conquest, they were all dressed very gay, with coats to the mid-knee, the head shorn, the

beard shaved, their arms laden with bracelets, and their faces painted.

Whosoever will enter into this argument since the Conquest, his pen may have a spacious walk; but, as I purpose to be brief, I will omit the royal habits of kings at their coronations, the mantle of St. Edward, the dalmatica with sleeves, the sacerdotal garment, their hose and sandals; as also the honourable habiliments, as robes of State, &c. Of these matters each would require a treatise. I will briefly note what I have observed more generally in my little reading.

Robert, eldest son to the Conqueror, used short hose, or stockings, and thereupon was named Court-hose, as he showed first the use of them to the English.

King Henry I. reprehended much of the immodesty of apparel in his days. The particulars are not specified; but the wearing of long hair, with locks and perukes, he abolished.

King Henry II. brought in the short mantle, and he therefore had the name of Court-mantle. In his time, silk was brought out of Greece into Sicily, and then into other parts of Christendom.

There was also a costly stuff, at these times, here in England, called by the people *aurifrisium*; what it was named in English I know not, but imagine it to signify embroidery with gold. Whatsoever it was, it was much desired by the Popes, and highly esteemed in Italy.

What the habits, both civil and military, were in the time of King John, Henry III., and the succeeding ages may better appear by their monuments, old glass windows, and ancient arras, than be found in writers of those times. As also the robes (which the King then allowed to each knight when he was dubbed) of green or burnet. Neither is it to be doubted but successive time, and English mutability, brought in continually new cuts, as in the time of King Edward III., which may be understood by this rhyme then made—

"Long beards, heartless,
Painted hoods, witless,
Gay coats, graceless,
Make England thriftless."

Many statutes were made to prevent the abuses of dress; an ancient history called "Eulogium" proves no less. "The Commons (saith he) were besotted in excess of apparel, in wide fur coats reaching to their loins, some in a garment reaching to their

heels, close before, and strutting out on the sides, so that on the back they make men seem women, and this they call by a ridiculous name—gown. Their hoods are little, tied under the chin, and buttoned like the women, but set with gold, silver, and precious stones. Their girdles are of gold and silver, some worth twenty marks. Their shoes and pattens are snouted and piked more than a finger long, crooking upwards, and fastened to the knees with chains of gold and silver. And thus were they garmented who (as this author saith) were lions in the hall and hares in the field. The book of Worcester reporteth that in the year 1369 they began to use caps of different colours, especially red, with costly linings; and in 1372 they first began to wear a new round short garment, called the cloak." Here you may see when gowns, cloaks, and caps first came in use; though, doubtless, they had some such like attire in different names.

How strangely they were attired in the times of King Richard II., Chaucer will tell us:—"Alas, may not a man see, as in our days, the sinful costly array of clothing, and namely in too much superfluity of clothing, such that maketh it so dear, to the harm of the people, not only the cost of embroidering, the disguised indenting, or barring, ounding, plaiting, winding, or bending, and semblable waste of cloth in vanity; but there is also the costly furring in their gowns, so much pouncing of chissel to make holes, so much dagging of sheirs forche, with the superfluity in length of the aforesaid gowns, trailing in the mire, on horse and also on foot, as well of man as of woman, that all that trailing is verily as in effect wasted, consumed, and threadbare, rather than given to the poor."

They had also, about this time, a kind of gown called a git, or jacket without sleeves, a loose cloak like a herald's coat of arms, called a tabard; short breeches called a court pie; a gorget called a chevesail, for as yet they used no bands about their neck. Queen Anne, wife to Richard II., who first taught English women to ride on side-saddles, as before they rode astride, brought in high head attire, piked with horns, and long trained gowns for women.

Not many years after, foolish pride so descended to the adorning of the foot, that it was proclaimed that no man should have his shoes broader at the toes than six inches.

Neither was the clergy clear from this pride, as we may perceive from Pierce Plowman; though we are assured that the clergy never wore silk or velvet until the time of the pompous Cardinal Wolsey, who opened that door to pride among them.

The variations in our dress since that time are too well known to be mentioned here; we shall only therefore conclude with observing, that even in this age of luxury, we have no great reason to think ourselves more absurd in point of dress than our ancestors, and that the only difference between us lies rather in the peculiarity of our fashions than the prevalence of absurdity in the other.

A BRUSH WITH THE INDIANS.

IN TWO PARTS.—I.

AS pretended, but not disinterested, friends of the Indians frequently acquit the latter of committing unprovoked attacks on helpless settlers and others, who have never in the slightest degree injured them, and often deny even that the Indians have been guilty of any hostile acts which justify the adoption of military measures to insure the protection and safety of our frontier settlements, the following statement is here given. This statement is taken from official records on file at the head-quarters Military Division of the Missouri, and gives only those murders and other depredations which were officially reported, and the white people mentioned as killed are exclusive of those slain in warfare. Many other murders by the Indians during this period no doubt occurred; but occurring, as they did, over a wide and sparsely settled tract of country, were never reported to the military authorities. The number killed in twelve months of 1867-8 was 154; wounded, 16; scalped, 41; while the burnings, ravagings, and plunderings were most numerous.

Having decided to employ frontiersmen to assist in punishing the Indians, the next question was the selection of a suitable leader. The choice, most fortunately, fell upon General George A. Forsyth ("Sandy"), then acting inspector-general of the department of Missouri, who, eager to render his country an important service, and not loath to share in the danger and excitement attendant upon such an enterprise, set himself energetically to work to raise and equip his command for the field. But little time was required, under Forsyth's stirring zeal,

to raise the required number of men. It was wisely decided to limit the number of frontiersmen to fifty. This enabled Forsyth to choose only good men; and the size of the detachment, considering that they were to move without ordinary transportation—in fact, were to almost adopt the Indian style of warfare—was as large as could be without being cumbersome. Last, but not least, it was to be composed of men who, from their leader down, were intent on accomplishing an important purpose; they were not out on any holiday tour or pleasure excursion. Their object was to find Indians—a difficult matter for a large force to accomplish, because the Indians are the first to discover their presence and take themselves out of the way; whereas with a small or moderate-sized detachment there is some chance, as Forsyth afterwards learned, of finding Indians.

Among all the officers of the army, old or young, no one could have been found better adapted to become the leader of an independent expedition, such as this was proposed to be, than General Forsyth. This is more particularly true considering the experiences which awaited this detachment. I had learned to know him well when we rode together in the Shenandoah Valley, sometimes in one direction, and sometimes, but rarely, in the other; and afterwards, in the closing struggle around Petersburg and Richmond, when his chief had been told to "press things," General Forsyth—"Sandy," as his comrades familiarly termed him—was an important member of the "press." In fact, one of the best terms to describe him by is irrepressible; for, no matter how defeat or disaster might stare us in the face, and, as I have intimated, cause us to ride the other way, Sandy always contrived to be of good cheer, and to be able to see the coming of a better day. This quality came in good play in the terrible encounter which I am about to describe.

The frontiersmen of the Kansas border, stirred up by numerous massacres committed in their midst by the savages, were only too eager and willing to join in an enterprise which promised to afford them an opportunity to visit just punishment upon their enemies.

Thirty selected men were procured at Fort Harker, Kansas, and twenty more at Fort Hays, sixty miles farther west. In four days the command was armed, mounted, and

equipped, and at once took the field. Lieutenant F. H. Beecher, of the Third Regular Infantry, one of the ablest and best young officers on the frontier, was second in command; and a surgeon was found in the person of Dr. John S. Movers, of Hays City, Kansas, a most competent man in his profession, and one who had had a large experience during the war of the rebellion as surgeon of one of the volunteer regiments from the State of New York. Sharpe Grover, one of the best guides and scouts the plains afforded, was the guide of the expedition, while many of the men had at different times served in the regular and volunteer forces. For example, the man selected to perform the duties of first sergeant of the detachment was Brevet Brigadier-General W. H. H. McCall, United States Volunteers, who commanded a brigade at the time the Confederate forces attempted to break the Federal lines in the early spring of 1865, and was breveted for gallantry on that occasion. As a general thing the men composing the party were just the class eminently qualified to encounter the dangers which were soon to confront them. They were brave, active, hardy, and energetic, and while they required a tight rein held over them, were, when properly handled, capable of accomplishing about all that any equal number of men could do under the same circumstances.

The party left Fort Hayes on the 29th of August, 1868, and, under special instructions from Major-General Sheridan, commanding the department, took a north-westerly course, scouting the country to the north of the Saline River, crossed the south fork of the Solomon, Bow Creek, north fork of the Solomon, Prairie Dog Creek, and then well out toward the Republican River; and, swinging around in the direction of Fort Wallace, made that post on the eighth day from their departure. Nothing was met worthy of notice, but there were frequent indications of large camps of Indians, which had evidently been abandoned only a few days or weeks before the arrival of the command.

Upon arriving at Fort Wallace, General Forsyth communicated with General Sheridan, and proceeded to refit his command.

On the morning of September 10, a small war party of Indians attacked a train near Sheridan, a small railroad town some eighty miles beyond Fort Wallace, killed two teamsters, and ran off a few cattle. As soon as

information of this reached Fort Wallace, Forsyth started with his command for the town of Sheridan, where he took the trail of the Indians and followed it until dark. The next morning it was resumed, until the Indians, finding themselves closely pursued, scattered in many directions, and the trail became so obscure as to be lost. Determined, however, to find the Indians this time, if they were in the country, he pushed on to Short Nose Creek, hoping to discover them in that vicinity. Carefully scouting in every direction for the trail, and still heading north as far as the Republican River, the command finally struck the trail of a small war party on the south bank of that stream, and followed it up to the forks of that river.

It was here Pawnee Killer and his band attacked our camp early one morning in the summer of 1867, and hurried me from my tent without allowing me time to attend to my toilet. Continuing on the trail, and crossing to the north bank, Forsyth found the trail growing constantly larger, as various smaller ones entered it from the south and north; and finally it developed into a broad and well-beaten road, along which large droves of cattle and horses had been driven. This trail led up the Arickaree fork of the Republican River, and constant indications of Indians, in the way of mocassins, jerked buffalo meat, and other articles, were found every few miles; but no Indians were seen. On the evening of the eighth day from Fort Wallace, the command halted, about five o'clock in the afternoon, and went into camp at or near a little island in the river, a mere sand-spit of earth, formed by the stream dividing at a little rift of earth that was rather more gravelly than the sand in its immediate vicinity, and coming together again about a hundred yards farther down the stream, which just here was about eight feet wide and two or three inches deep.

The watercourses in this part of the country in the dry season are mere threads of water meandering along the broad sandy bed of the river, which during the months of May and June is generally full to its banks, and at that time capable of floating an ordinary ship; while later in the season there is not enough water to float the smallest row-boat. In fact, in many places the stream sinks into the sands and disappears for a considerable distance, finally making its way up to the surface, and flowing on

until it again disappears and reappears many times in the course of a long day's journey.

Encamping upon the bank of the stream at this point—which at that time was supposed by the party to be Delaware Creek, but which was afterwards discovered to be the Arickaree fork of the Republican River—the command made the usual preparations for passing the night. This point was but a few marches from the scene of Kidder's massacre. Having already been out from Fort Wallace eight days, and not taking waggons with them, their supplies began to run low, although they had been husbanded with great care. During the last three days game had been very scarce, which fact convinced Forsyth and his party that the Indians whose trail they were following had scoured the country, and driven off every kind of game by their hunting parties. The following day would see them out of supplies of all kinds; but, feeling assured that he was within striking distance of the Indians, Forsyth determined to push on until he found them, and fight them, even if he could not whip them, in order that they might realize that their rendezvous was discovered, and that the Government was at last in earnest when it said that they were to be punished for their depredations on the settlements.

After posting their pickets and partaking of the plainest of suppers, Forsyth's little party disposed of themselves on the ground to sleep, little dreaming who was to sound their réveillè in so unceremonious a manner.

At dawn on the following day, September 17, 1868, the guard gave the alarm "Indians." Instantly every man sprang to his feet, and, with the true instinct of the frontiersman, grasped his rifle with one hand, while with the other he seized his lariat, that the Indians might not stampede the horses. Six Indians dashed up towards the party, rattling bells, shaking buffalo robes, and firing their guns. The four pack mules belonging to the party broke away, and were last seen galloping over the hills. Three other animals made their escape, as they had only been hobbled, in direct violation of the orders which directed that all the animals should be regularly picketed to a stake or picket-pin, firmly driven into the ground. A few shots caused the Indians to sheer off, and disappear in a gallop over the hills. Several of the men started in pursuit,

but were instantly ordered to rejoin the command, which was ordered to saddle up with all possible haste, Forsyth feeling satisfied that the attempt to stampede the stock was but the prelude to a general and more determined attack. Scarcely were the saddles thrown on the horses, and the girths tightened, when Grover, the guide, placing his hand on Forsyth's shoulder, gave vent to his astonishment as follows—

"O heavens, General, look at the Indians!"

Well might he be excited. From every direction they dashed towards the band. Over the hills, from the west and north, along the river, on the opposite bank, everywhere and in every direction they made their appearance. Finely mounted, in full war paint, their long scalp locks braided with eagles' feathers, and with all the paraphernalia of a barbarous war party—with wild whoops and exultant shouts, on they came.

There was but one thing to do. Realizing that they had fallen into a trap, Forsyth, who had faced danger too often to hesitate in an emergency, determined he should at least make the enemy bear their share of the loss. He ordered his men to lead their horses to the island, tie them to the few bushes that were growing there in a circle, throw themselves upon the ground in the same form, and make the best fight they could for their lives. In less time than it takes to pen these few words, the order was put into execution. Three of the best shots in the party took position in the grass under the bank of the river which covered the north end of the island; the others formed a circle inside of the line of animals, and, throwing themselves upon the ground, began to reply to the fire of the Indians, which soon became hot and galling in the extreme. Throwing themselves from their horses, the Indians crawled up to within a short distance of the island, and opened a steady and well-directed fire upon the party. Armed with the best quality of guns, many of them having the latest pattern breech-loaders, with fixed ammunition (as proof of this many thousand empty shells of Spencer and Henry rifle ammunition were found on the ground occupied by the Indians after the fight), they soon made sad havoc among the men and horses. As it grew lighter, and the Indians could be distinguished, Grover expressed the greatest astonishment at the number of warriors, which he placed at

nearly one thousand. Other members of the party estimated them at even a greater number. Forsyth expressed the opinion that there could not be more than four or five hundred, but in this it seems he was mistaken, as some of the Brulés, Sioux, and Cheyennes have since told him that their war party was nearly nine hundred strong, and was composed of Brulés, Sioux, Cheyennes, and Dog Soldiers; furthermore, that they had been watching him for five days previous to their attack, and had called in all the warriors they could get to their assistance.

The men of Forsyth's party began covering themselves at once, by using case and pocket knives in the gravelly sand, and soon had thrown up quite a little earthwork, consisting of detached mounds in the form of a circle. About this time Forsyth was wounded by a Minié ball, which, striking him in the right thigh, ranged upward, inflicting an exceedingly painful wound. Two of his men had been killed, and a number of others wounded. Leaning over to give directions to some of his men, who were firing too rapidly, and in fact becoming a little too nervous for their own good, Forsyth was again wounded, this time in the left leg, the ball breaking and badly shattering the bone midway between the knee and ankle. About the same time Dr. Movers, the surgeon of the party, who, owing to the hot fire of the Indians, was unable to render surgical aid to his wounded comrades, had seized his trusty rifle and was doing capital service, was hit in the temple by a bullet, and never spoke but one intelligible word again.

Matters were now becoming desperate, and nothing but cool, steady fighting would avail to mend them. The hills surrounding the immediate vicinity of the fight were filled with women and children, who were chanting war songs and filling the air with whoops and yells. The medicine men, a sort of high priests, and older warriors, rode around outside of the combatants, being careful to keep out of range, and encouraged their young braves by beating a drum, shouting Indian chants, and using derisive words toward their adversaries, whom they cursed roundly for skulking like wolves, and dared to come out and fight like men.

Meantime the scouts were slowly but surely "counting game," and more than one Indian fell to the rear badly wounded by

the rifles of the frontiersmen. Within an hour after the opening of the fight, the Indians were fairly frothing at the mouth with rage at the unexpected resistance they met, while the scouts had settled down to earnest work, and obeyed to the letter the orders of Forsyth, whose oft-reiterated command was—

“Fire slowly, aim well, keep yourselves covered, and, above all, don’t throw away a single cartridge.”

Taken all in all, with a very few exceptions, the men behaved superbly. Obedient to every word of command, cool, plucky, determined, and fully realizing the character of their foes, they were a match for their enemies thus far at every point. About nine o’clock in the morning the last horse belonging to the scouts was killed, and one of the redskins was heard to exclaim, in tolerably good English—

“There goes the last horse, anyhow!”

A proof that some of the savages had at some time been intimate with the whites.

Shortly after nine o’clock a portion of the Indians began to form just below the foot of the island, and soon about one hundred and twenty Dog Soldiers, the “banditti of the plains,” supported by some three hundred or more other mounted men, made their appearance, drawn up just beyond rifle shot below the island, and headed by the famous chief, Roman Nose, prepared to charge the scouts. Superbly mounted, almost naked, although in full war dress, and painted in the most hideous manner, with their rifles in their hands, and formed with a front of about sixty men, they awaited the signal of their chief to charge, with apparently the greatest confidence. Roman Nose addressed a few words to the mounted warriors, and almost immediately afterwards the dismounted Indians surrounding the island poured a perfect shower of bullets into the midst of Forsyth’s little party. Realizing that a crisis was at hand, and hot work was before him, Forsyth told his men to reload every rifle, and to take and load the rifles of the killed and wounded of the party, and not to fire a shot until ordered to do so.

For a few moments the galling fire of the Indians rendered it impossible for any of the scouts to raise or expose any part of their persons. This was precisely the effect which the Indians desired to produce by the fire of their riflemen. It was this that the

mounted warriors, under the leadership of Roman Nose, were waiting for. The Indians had planned their assault in a manner very similar to that usually adopted by civilized troops in assailing a fortified place. The fire of the Indian riflemen performed the part of the artillery on such occasions, in silencing the fire of the besieged, and preparing the way for the assaulting column.

Seeing that the little garrison was stunned by the heavy fire of the dismounted Indians, and rightly judging that now, if ever, was the proper time to charge them, Roman Nose and his band of mounted warriors, with a wild, ringing war-whoop, echoed by the women and children on the hills, started forward. On they came, presenting even to the brave men awaiting the charge a most superb sight. Brandishing their guns, echoing back the cries of encouragement of their women and children on the surrounding hills, and confident of victory, they rode bravely and recklessly to the assault. Soon they were within the range of the rifles of their friends, and of course the dismounted Indians had to slacken their fire for fear of hitting their own warriors. This was the opportunity for the scouts, and they were not slow to seize it.

“Now!” shouted Forsyth.

“Now!” echoed Beecher, McCall, and Grover.

And the scouts, springing to their knees, and casting their eyes coolly along the barrels of their rifles, opened on the advancing savages as deadly a fire as the same number of men ever yet sent forth from an equal number of rifles. Unchecked, undaunted, on dashed the warriors; steadily rang the clear, sharp reports of the rifles of the frontiersmen. Roman Nose, the chief, is seen to fall dead from his horse; then Medicine Man is killed, and for an instant the column of braves, now within ten feet of the scouts, hesitates—falters. A ringing cheer from the scouts, who perceive the effect of their well-directed fire; and the Indians begin to break and scatter in every direction, unwilling to rush to a hand-to-hand struggle with the men who, although outnumbered, yet know how to make such effective use of their rifles. A few more shots from the frontiersmen, and the Indians are forced back beyond range, and their first attack ends in defeat. Forsyth turns to Grover anxiously, and inquires—

“Can they do better than that, Grover?”

"I have been on the plains, General, since a boy, and never saw such a charge as that before. I think they have done their level best," was the reply.

"All right," responds Sandy; "then we are good for them."

So close did the advance warriors of the attacking column come in the charge, that several of their dead bodies lay within a few feet of the intrenchments. The scouts had also suffered a heavy loss in this attack. The greatest and most irreparable was that of Lieutenant Beecher, who was mortally wounded, and died at sunset of that day. He was one of the most reliable and efficient officers doing duty on the plains. Modest, energetic, and ambitious in his profession, had he lived he undoubtedly would have had a brilliant future before him; and had opportunity such as is offered by a great war ever occurred, Lieutenant Beecher would have without doubt achieved distinction.

The Indians still kept up a continuous fire from their dismounted warriors; but as the scouts by this time were well covered by their miniature earthworks, it did little execution. At two o'clock in the afternoon the savages again attempted to carry the island by a mounted charge, and again at sunset; but having been deprived of their best and most fearless leader by the fall of Roman Nose, they were not so daring or impulsive as in the first charge, and were both times repulsed with heavy losses. At dark they ceased firing, and withdrew their forces for the night. This gave the little garrison on the island an opportunity to take a breathing spell, and Forsyth to review the situation and sum up how he had fared.

The result was not consoling. His trusted Lieutenant Beecher was lying dead by his side; his surgeon, Movers, was mortally wounded; two of his men killed, four mortally wounded, four severely, and ten slightly. Here, out of a total of fifty-one, were twenty-three killed and wounded. His own condition—his right thigh fearfully lacerated, and his left leg badly broken—only rendered the other discouraging circumstances doubly so. As before stated, the Indians had killed all his horses early in the fight. His supplies were exhausted, and there was no way of dressing the wounds of himself or comrades, as the medical stores had been captured by the Indians. He was about one hundred

and ten miles from the nearest post, and savages were all around him. The outlook could scarcely have been less cheering. But Forsyth's disposition and pluck incline him to speculate more upon that which is, or may be gained, than to repine at that which is irrevocably lost. This predominant trait in his character now came in good play. Instead of wasting time in vain regrets over the advantages gained by his enemies, he quietly set about looking up the chances in his favour. And, let the subject be what it may, I will match Sandy "against an equal number" for making a favourable showing of the side which he espouses or advocates. To his credit account he congratulated himself and comrades, first upon the fact that they had beaten off their foes; second, water could be had inside their intrenchments by digging a few feet below the surface; then for food "horse and mule meat," to use Sandy's expression, "was lying around loose in any quantity;" and last, but most important of all, he had plenty of ammunition. Upon these circumstances and facts Forsyth built high hopes of successfully contending against any renewed assaults of the savages.

Two men, Trudeau and Stillwell, both good scouts, and familiar with the plains, were selected to endeavour to make their way through the cordon of Indians, and proceed to Fort Wallace, one hundred and ten miles distant, and report the condition of Forsyth and party, and act as guides to the troops which would be at once sent to the relief of the besieged scouts. It was a perilous mission, and called for the display of intrepid daring, cool judgment, and unflinching resolution, besides a thorough knowledge of the country, as much of their journey would necessarily be made during the darkness of night, to avoid discovery by wandering bands of Indians, who, no doubt, would be on the alert to intercept just such parties going for relief. Forsyth's selection of the two men named was a judicious one.

Stillwell I afterwards knew well, having employed him as scout with my command for a long period. At the time referred to, however, he was a mere beardless boy of perhaps nineteen years, possessing a trim, lithe figure, which was set off to great advantage by the jaunty suit of buckskin which he wore, cut and fringed according to the true style of the frontiersman. In

his waist-belt he carried a large-sized revolver and a hunting knife. These, with his rifle, constituted his equipment. A capital shot whether afoot or on horseback, and a perfect horseman, this beardless boy on more than one occasion proved himself a dangerous foe to the wily red man.

These two men, Trudeau and Stillwell, after receiving Forsyth's instructions in regard to their dangerous errand, and being provided with his compass and map, started as soon as it was sufficiently dark on their long, weary tramp over a wild, desert country, thickly infested with deadly enemies. After their departure the wounded were brought in, the dead animals unsaddled, and the horse blankets used to make the wounded as comfortable as possible.

The earthworks were then strengthened by using the dead animals and saddles. A well was dug inside the intrenchments, and large quantities of horse and mule meat were cut off and buried in the sand to prevent it from putrefying. It had begun to rain, and the wounded were rendered less feverish by their involuntary but welcome bath.

As was expected, the night passed without incident or disturbance from the savages; but early the next morning the fight was renewed by the Indians again surrounding the island as before, and opening fire from the rifles of their dismounted warriors. They did not attempt to charge the island as they had done the previous day, when their attempts in this direction had cost them too dearly; but they were none the less determined and eager to overpower the little band which had been the cause of such heavy loss to them already. The scouts, thanks to their efforts during the night, were now well protected, and suffered but little from the fire of the Indians; while the latter, being more exposed, paid the penalty whenever affording the scouts a chance with their rifles. The day was spent without any decided demonstration on the part of the red men, except to keep up as constant a fire as possible on the scouts, and to endeavour to provoke the latter to reply as often as possible; the object, no doubt, being to induce the frontiersmen to exhaust their supply of ammunition. But they were not to be led into this trap; each cartridge they estimated as worth to them one Indian, and nothing less would satisfy them.

A WOMAN'S WISH.

CHAPTER II.

MRS. VERE had come to Haselea broken in health and spirit, yearning for the shelter of the peaceful old home till she could resolve on some plan for the future; and when this was denied her, she thankfully accepted the hospitality of the old woman who had known her in her childhood. At her cottage she stayed long after Mrs. Norris's grudgingly bestowed alms had been expended; for Elsie, ready to endure any toil rather than be separated from her ailing mother, had put by all her dreams of being a governess, and stitched away cheerfully at the plain work Nancy procured for her at the Hall. The small weekly sum she was able to earn would not have sufficed for their wants, but Walter Norris found his way to the cottage, respectfully introduced himself to his aunt, and claimed a right as her nephew to bring her those little delicacies of which she stood in absolute need.

Elsie, sitting in the latticed window, often too busy to give him more than a nod and a smile, soon learned to think him the best and kindest of men; as well as to listen for his coming, and find those days sadly long in which there was no hope of seeing him. While Walter, who had found the farm dull since his sisters married and left it, would stand gazing at Elsie while he listened to the weak voice of her invalid mother, and tell himself how much the trim little figure and sweet pale face would brighten the hearth where none sat now but he and his silent mother.

He did not know why it was that Mrs. Norris's austere brow wore such a settled frown, nor why all his efforts at cheerful conversation met but the briefest responses. She did not choose to arouse his indignation by acknowledging that her gossips had brought her detailed accounts of his visits to Nancy's cottage. But when the report reached her that Walter—her Walter, who might have married so well—had been seen escorting his poor relation home from church during a pelting shower of rain, she set her teeth firmly together, and, dressing with more than usual care, walked to her sister-in-law's humble lodging.

Elsie was out. So much the better. During the cold "How d'ye do's?" she had accorded the girl at chance rencontres, she

had been struck with the modest dignity of her manner; and would, had Elsie been present, have felt restrained from pouring forth the bitter taunts before which Mrs. Vere tearfully quailed.

"You are encouraging my son to come here," she said, in her harshest tones. "All Haselea is crying shame upon you. It was to get your daughter well married that you came, and Walter is too honest himself to see that he is your dupe. But take care. The farm is mine, left to me unconditionally; and the girl who has plotted and schemed to win my boy's love shall never set foot in it as its mistress. I'd rather will it to the parish for an almshouse or a hospital."

She had swept away before Mrs. Vere recovered breath to deny these allegations; and Elsie, who found her mother in great agitation, little dreamed who had so lately quitted the cottage. Nor did Mrs. Vere distress her by relating what had occurred; though, with gathering indignation against both mother and son, she pondered over Mrs. Norris's bitter speeches till Walter came again.

Elsie often recalled that bright August morning, and the measured tramp of his horse's feet, as Walter Norris came along the road on his way to market. He threw his rein over the gate-post, and strode up the little garden, merrily tossing a bunch of flowers in at the open window where the young girl sat, afraid to look up lest he should see the pleasure dancing in her eyes.

But Mrs. Vere met him with such troubled looks that his gaiety vanished.

"You must not come here again, Walter. Your mother does not like it, and I fear I have done wrong in permitting your visits."

Elsie laid down her work, and glanced from one to the other; but Walter answered hotly—

"I am of sufficient age to be the judge of my own actions; and while I always strive to obey my mother's wishes, I refuse to be swayed by her prejudices."

"You must not come here again, Walter," Elsie's mother repeated, more decidedly than before, although her eye had fallen on Elsie's troubled face, and her heart ached as she recognized the pain she was inflicting.

"Do not say that, Aunt Mary," the young man pleaded. "If you knew how much—"

But she checked the avowal he was hastening to make.

"Hush, Walter! I'll not hear anything

that might lead to strife betwixt you and your mother. Let Elsie and me keep to our ways, and you to yours. It must be so," she added, as he was beginning to remonstrate. "Your visits—kindly as they are meant—are harming us."

He crimsoned with anger.

"Who dares say anything to your discredit or my cousin's?"

"I do not care to trace the scandal to its source," Mrs. Vere generously replied. "And now, good-bye. You have been very good to me, and may Heaven bless you for it!"

He turned irresolutely to Elsie.

"And do you bid me to go? Do you wish me to come no more?"

She rose from her seat, and, scarcely knowing what she did, held out her hands; but Mrs. Vere stepped between them directly.

"Elsie will obey her mother. She knows that I do not willingly pain her. Go, Walter. I insist upon it!"

She spoke so firmly that the young man was constrained to yield, and, turning his horse's head, he galloped home to question his mother, whom, in spite of Mrs. Vere's silence, he suspected.

Mrs. Norris was prepared for him, and alternately threatened her son and reviled the innocent Elsie, till, unable to obtain a hearing, Walter left her. But that night, when every one else had gone to rest, he came to her, and said, firmly—

"I can't sleep, mother, till I've told you the resolution to which your injustice has brought me. I love my cousin Elsie. I feel in my heart that she is worthy of all the affection I can bestow upon her."

"And for this girl, whom you haven't known more than a couple of months, you will defy me?"

"No, mother, I will not," he quietly answered. "When my father was dying, I promised him that I'd do my utmost for you and the girls; and, God helping me, I'll keep my word always. But I'll be true to Elsie, too; and I'll wait till your own good sense makes you ashamed of your prejudices, and you agree to accept her as your daughter."

Mrs. Norris answered him scornfully—

"You say this because you think it'll work me to your will. Perhaps your clever aunt advised it. Are you to go to-morrow and tell her how easily you have befooled me?"

"Aunt Mary has forbidden me to visit Elsie again," Walter replied. "If you knew her better, you would be sorry for what you have just said."

He turned on his heel; and Mrs. Norris went to bed, assuring herself she had done her duty in breaking the nets two wily women had been laying for the son who, in her partial estimation, was worthy to mate with a queen.

CHAPTER III.

THOUGH Walter kept his word, and avoided Nancy Trusler's cottage, he continued to send those baskets of country produce—eggs, ham, butter, and a delicate chicken or rabbit beneath—which Luke Warner's wife, his only confidante, was in the habit of purchasing at his request. But Mrs. Vere was too proud to continue to accept gifts she could no longer believe that Walter's mother sanctioned, and they were so persistently returned that at last he saw the uselessness of offering them.

But the loss of these acceptable additions to their table was so severely felt, that Elsie was obliged to cast about for some way of increasing her earnings. Her needle would not support them; and she stole away one evening, while her mother was dozing, to consult Nancy.

"Maybe ye wouldn't like to help in the hopping, missie?" the old woman doubtfully inquired. "'Most everybody in Haselea has a spell at it, and thinks no shame of it. Even the young men and women in the shops gets holiday. Do come out and pick awhile at some one's basket; and them little fingers o' yours are just fit for the work. My grandson and me, we earned nigh upon five pound at Mr. Anvers's last 'ear."

The last piece of information decided it. Five pounds would be a fortune to Elsie, under present circumstances; and despite the feeble remonstrances of her mother, on a hazy morning in September she went, under the guardianship of old Nancy, to commence her task.

Close to the gate leading to Sheepchatch Farm they met Walter Norris. It was their first meeting since Mrs. Vere had forbidden his visits, and though the will of their parents had parted them, they saw no harm in clasping hands, and lingering together for a few minutes, while Nancy, smiling and muttering to herself, trudged slowly onward.

As soon as they were quite alone, Walter

began to question his cousin, and to gather from her brief reluctant answers the sore straits to which she and her mother were reduced. His own brow began to contract, and his heart to swell angrily, as he listened.

"My aunt is unkind when she refuses to accept anything from me. Does she forget that when you suffer I suffer too? It is a hard matter to be patient and dutiful when I know that we—"

But Elsie's imploring glance checked him, and kissing the hand that was struggling from his clasp, he asked whither she was bound that dewy morning. She was startled by the burst of angry feeling with which he heard her reply.

"To Anvers's grounds to help in the picking! What, you about to brave the changes of the weather—to mingle with the lawless people he employs, and to be compelled to listen to their ribald songs and jests, their quarrels and their curses! Never, Elsie—never shall you do this!"

"You frighten me," faltered his cousin. "Pray say no more. How can I let any personal discomfort stand in the way when my earnings are so sorely needed? Remember that it will be no worse for me than for others."

"You say so," Walter answered, "because you do not know the class of people with whom you will be compelled to associate, nor how little such men as Anvers ever do to prevent the obscene language, the fighting, and the drunkenness that disgrace Haselea while the hop-picking lasts."

Elsie looked distressed, and wistfully asked—

"But what can I do? I have scarcely had any work since the family at the Hall went to the seaside, and we must live."

"And yet you will not let me help you! Elsie"—and, all else forgotten but her need of his protection, he drew her towards him—"Elsie, you must be my wife, and so put an end to all these miserable perplexities. Why should we let the injustice of others keep us apart?"

"Hush, Walter!" she answered. "It is not like you to tempt me to do wrong. How could I meet my mother's eyes to-night, if I knew I meditated wilfully disobeying her?"

"Anyhow, you shall not go to Anvers's hop-picking," cried Walter, who found it very difficult just now to reconcile himself to his duty. "If you must join the pickers,

you shall be where I can guard you from insult."

Shouting a word of explanation to Nancy, he led her, somewhat against her will, to where, on his own land, a group of decent cottagers, with their children, were waiting to have their baskets delivered to them and commence their pleasant labours.

There was a hush in their voluble chattering as "the master" led Elsie towards them, and Luke Warner's wife came forward in obedience to his beckoning finger.

"My cousin will help us this season, Margaret; and I shall look to you to see that she is not exposed to any annoyance."

No one ventured any comment upon this, and in a little while Elsie was trying to emulate the rapidity with which her neighbours plucked the clusters of fragrant hops from beneath their rough leaves, and flung them into the baskets. Poor Davy, whom her compassionate looks had captivated long since, shambled from his father's side to help his new friend, by supplying her with the heavily garlanded poles it was her province to strip; and Elsie, thankful even for the good offices of an idiot boy, told him in return the simple stories best suited to his clouded understanding.

She seldom saw Walter. He was too delicate to distress her with attentions her mother had forbidden her to receive, and contented himself with learning from Margaret Warner that she was looking rosier and better for the healthy occupation. It was not long before Mrs. Norris learned what he had done, and in a tumult of rage she intercepted him at the first opportunity.

"Is it true that Mary Vere's bold daughter is picking in our ground? How dares she? Is she brought here to show me how utterly you set my wishes at defiance?"

"Would you have had the child of my father's sister thrust into contact with Anvers's people?" demanded Walter. "Is it not sufficient disgrace to us that we live at ease while this poor child toils for the daily bread of her widowed mother."

Subdued by the tone her son had taken, Mrs. Norris turned sullenly away; and Elsie came and went unchecked till the hopping was over. Her pleasant ways and sweet smiles won for her plenty of friends among the cottagers, and the roughest of the labourers employed at Sheephatch showed themselves good-naturedly eager to lighten her labours.

But the work which was commenced under sunny skies had to be finished in a pelting shower, and poor Elsie was drenched long before she reached Nancy's cottage. All the precautions her anxious mother resorted to proved of no avail. A feverish cold ensued; and Margaret Warner, who had spent her youth in service at Sheephatch, and therefore considered herself a privileged person, talked loudly in the dairy, while waiting for her milk, of Elsie's illness.

"Who is ill? Who are you talking about? Can I do anything?" asked Mrs. Norris, coming in suddenly.

She was clever at making jellies and delicate dishes for the sick, and proud of the faith placed in her remedies by her neighbours. To ask her advice and aid in doubtful cases was a sure passport to Mrs. Norris's favour.

The dairymaid gave her garrulous companion a warning look, but Margaret Warner shared the general indignation that a Norris bred and born should be treated like a stranger, and fearlessly made answer—

"It's Miss Elsie Vere that's ill, please 'm, with a cold caught the other day, when she ran home through the rain instead of coming here for shelter, as we did. The poor dear should have wine and arrowroot, Nancy Trusler says; may be, 'm, you've a little in store you could give me for her."

Mrs. Norris walked to the window, and stood there, tying and untying her wide apron strings, with looks that grew harder and colder every moment; but after a long struggle with herself, she went to her store closet, and filled a basket with those odds and ends most likely to be acceptable to an invalid. No relenting towards Elsie or her mother prompted the gift; but a sullen determination that no one should be able to say help had been asked for them at Sheephatch, and refused.

Elsie's cold proved to be the forerunner of a low, lingering fever. At the very moment Mrs. Vere was relieved from all other anxieties, by the receipt of a large sum which had been owing to her husband, Elsie succumbed to the symptoms with which she had been wrestling for some days. Christmas was fast approaching, and still the widow's precious child lay prone on the little sofa, smiling cheerfully into the anxious face of her mother, but incapable of making any greater exertion.

Walter Norris grew restless and sorrowful

as the weeks went by, and his inquiries always received the same answer, "Neither better nor worse." Did his mother feel no sympathy for his suffering, as night after night he sat with folded arms and drooping head, staring into the fire, or breathing heavy sighs which she could interpret but too well? Perhaps she did, for she was unusually gentle to him; but she could not meet his eye. Deep in her heart there lurked a wish, never put into words, but hourly growing stronger, as instead of putting the temptation from her she permitted herself to dwell upon it.

If Elsie would but die!

Walter Norris would have shrunk from his mother with horror if he had known how greedily she listened to reports of the girl's danger; and with what secret pleasure she gave credit to Margaret Warner's prediction, that the pretty young creature would never be strong and well again.

The wish for Elsie's death haunted her as she went about her daily duties: it followed her to her chamber when she knelt down to pray. At first she would start up again, sick and shuddering, at the depth of her own wickedness; but conscience soon ceased to trouble her.

"It was no fault of hers that the girl was ill," she told herself. "Who could blame her for wishing Walter set free from the idle passion which was making his life a misery to him? Elsie dead, her boy's love would be hers once more, and there would be peace between them."

Perhaps of the twain who dwelt at Sheep-hatch that winter, and sat together through the long evenings, silent and absorbed, it was not Walter, with all his anxiety, who was the more unhappy, for his soul was burdened with no unacknowledged sin.

It had been Mrs. Norris's custom to invite her daughters and their husbands to spend the festive season at the farm; but on this occasion no invitation was sent. She could not appear blithe and contented, nor forward the rejoicings of those about her, while her ear was always on the strain for the tidings of Elsie's death. Walter attributed her conduct to a delicate consideration for his feelings, and threw his arms around her neck and kissed her lovingly, ere he rode away one morning to transact some business at the town.

"Your heart's in the right place, after all, dear mother; and now I may tell you

that my poor Elsie is really mending at last."

His Elsie, did he call her? Had he looked in Mrs. Norris's face as he spoke, he must have suspected the real thoughts she was cherishing; but his horse—a young thing he was riding during the temporary lameness of Brownie—was impatient, and with one hurried "God bless you, mother!" he rode away.

The servants at Sheephatch had but a sorry life of it that day, for Mrs. Norris railed at and rated them, till the dairymaid, who was tender-hearted, wept profusely, and the cook took her hands out of the flour to give warning.

In the same bitter mood their mistress sat at twilight awaiting her son's return, and brooding over the tidings he had told so gladly. Elsie was recovering; her illness had strengthened her power over Walter, and the jealous mother's hatred of the girl who was ousting her from her supremacy took a fiercer aspect.

She had so loved this boy—her only one; so fondly and faithfully striven to make him happy and prosperous. For him she had risen early and worked late, asking no other reward than his affection; and now, for a frivolous, designing girl, she saw herself in danger of being neglected, perhaps forgotten; and more bitterly than ever she wished again that Elsie might yet die and trouble her no more.

The striking of the clock aroused her at last to the consciousness that it was long past the hour at which Walter had promised to return. His punctuality was proverbial; and when another hour had elapsed without his coming, she went into the kitchen, where Luke Warner was basking beside the wood fire, waiting to see "the master" about some work.

This man, stolid by nature and not easily alarmed, made light of Mrs. Norris's alarm, and suggested that the master might have met with some friends at Haselea who would not let him leave them. His mother rejected the idea as an insult. Walter never lingered with roysterers at an inn; and Warner was sharply ordered off home. Yet his supposition was not so intolerable as the thought that he might have broken his word, and stopped at Nancy Trusler's to spend the evening with his aunt and cousin.

Ten o'clock struck, and the passionate woman folded a shawl over her head, and

opened the outer door. The night was cold but clear; not a sound was audible, except the subdued voices of the servants in their chamber above; and walking down to the gate where Walter had first seen his cousin, she pushed back her muffler and listened for his horse's footsteps.

Ten minutes—a long quarter of an hour, but still no signs of the truant; and compressing her lips ominously, Mrs. Norris crossed the stile, and took her way to Nancy Trusler's cottage.

SEVEN METALS.

IN the discovery of the metals men first asserted their mastery over nature; yet the discovery is still progressing. Before the fifteenth century only seven were positively known. They were each held sacred, among the ancients, to some ruling deity. Gold—indestructible, malleable, the richest in colouring, the most precious of decorations—was consecrated to Jupiter, or the sun, and had already assumed the supremacy which it has never lost. It was coined into the heavy darics of Persia and the aureus of imperial Rome. It was used to gild temples and statues, was wrought into rich jewellery, and woven in delicate threads that enlivened the flowered stuffs of Babylon.

Gold mines and gold-bearing streams were found in Arabia, Syria, Greece, Italy, and Spain, and the pursuit of the precious metal was carried on with various success by countless throngs of miners. The richest mines, at least in later ages, were those of Spain; and the enormous productiveness of the Spanish soil was slowly exhausted by the successive labours of the Carthaginians and the Romans. So successful was their industry, that but little gold or silver can now be found in a territory where the precious metal once lay scattered in boundless profusion on the surface of the earth.

Silver ranked next to gold, and was named from the soft light of the moon. The richest silver mines were those of Spain. It was wrought into cups, vases, lamps; adorned the helmets and shields of warriors; and formed the costly mirrors with which the Roman ladies shocked the austerity of Lactantius or Jerome. The beautiful silver coins of the Greek and Roman cities fill modern collections. Five other metals—iron, copper, mercury, lead, and tin—were employed by the ancients for various pur-

poses; they made steel by a rude process, and brass without discovering zinc.

For many ages no addition was made to the sacred seven. Three thousand years passed away before it was suspected that the number could be increased—a memorable example of the slowness of human apprehension. At length, in 1490, antimony was added to the metallic family; and not far off from the period of the discovery of a new world, the chemists were about to enter upon fresh fields of science, scarcely less boundless or inviting.

A second metal, bismuth, came in almost with the Reformation. Zinc, perhaps the most important of the new family, may have preceded the others; it was certainly described long before. It is, indeed, quite curious to notice how the bright metal had been constantly forcing itself upon the attention of careful observers, and had yet been wholly overlooked; had been used by the ancients, in the form of an earth, to colour copper into brass, and give it a shining surface like gold; was seen dropping from the furnaces of the Middle Ages, or melted in rich flakes from their walls.

Two magicians, or philosophers, at last detected the error of ages; and Albertus Magnus and Paracelsus probably both discovered that zinc was as indestructible and as free from foreign substances as gold. It seemed a pure element. Paracelsus, who was fond of penetrating to the source of things, admits that he could not tell how the bright metal grew; nor in the height of their magic renown was it ever foreseen that the rare substance the sorcerers had discovered would one day shed knowledge, in tongues of fire, from London to Japan.

Two centuries followed, during which no metallic substance was discovered. Paracelsus found no successor; Albertus, almost the first man of science in Europe, was remembered only as a sorcerer. It was not until 1733 that the vast field of metallic discovery began to open upon man. Two valuable and well-known metals—platinum and nickel—among several others, first appeared about the middle of the eighteenth century. The number of the metals now rapidly enlarged; galvanism lent its aid to dissolve the hardest earths; and at length, in the opening of the nineteenth century, a cluster of brilliant discoveries aroused the curiosity of science.

Each eminent philosopher seemed to

produce new metals. Berzelius discovered three; Davy, the Paracelsus of his age, is the scientific parent of five—potassium, sodium, barium, strontium, calcium. The numbers advanced, until already more than fifty metals, of various importance, have been given to the arts. The new experiments in light have added cesium and rubidium; and no limit can now be fixed for the metallic family, which for so many ages embraced only seven members, the emblems of the ruling gods.

TABLE TALK.

A PROPOS of the attempt to assassinate Prince Bismarck, a singular theory has been advanced, to the effect that excessive heat increases the homicidal tendency against which every man has sometimes to contend. In illustration of the theory, a patient professor of Breslau has brought together instances of some of the more celebrated cases of regicide, to show that they have generally been made in the month of July. Thus, on the 12th of July, 1581, William of Orange was assassinated by Balthasar Gerard; on the 12th of July, 1764, the same fate befel Prince Ivan VI., son of Anne of Russia; 27th July, 1835, Fieschi fired his infernal machine against Louis Philippe; 18th July, 1844, Fritz Scherck, a burgomaster of Storkov, fired two pistol shots at the King of Prussia, but without touching him; on the 20th July, 1846, another attempt was made on the life of Louis Philippe; on the 5th July, 1853, occurred Orsini's memorable attack on Napoleon III.; and on the 14th July, 1861, Oscar Becker fired at King William of Prussia. This collocation of dates is certainly remarkable, but it would prove more if the statistics of the other months in the year were prepared with equal care.

SOME INTERESTING and useful facts relative to papers and books in safes were developed by a fire. What is generally considered poor paper—considerably "clayed," as paper-makers term it—stood the best test. The gilding on burned and charred account-books shone out bright and clear. Books crammed closely into a safe suffered much less than those set in loosely. Characters on charred papers, by the use of anything that moistened them to a certain degree—which was difficult to obtain exactly

—were made legible through a magnifying glass. Lead pencil marks could be distinguished where ink marks were obliterated.

THOUSANDS OF PERSONS have paid large sums of money to be cured of stammering. If there is any simple art by which those who are afflicted with this difficulty can be relieved, we think, in the cause of humanity, it should be widely known. A contemporary gives a remedy which it says is successful in a majority of cases. The secret is simply this: The stammerer is to mark the time in his speech, just as it is ordinarily done in singing. He is at first to beat on every syllable while reading some simple composition. One can beat time by striking the finger on the knee, by simply hitting the thumb against the forefinger, or moving the large toe in the boot. Some such method as this would doubtless be beneficial in all cases where there is no natural stricture or imperfection in the organs of speech, which could only be removed by a surgical operation. Ordinary stammering would be cured by reading aloud an hour a day, observing the above-mentioned method, and also practising it in conversation.

FOR DEEP-SEA SOUNDINGS, piano wire of 22-gauge is less cumbersome and heavy, and acts with less friction, than the hempen line now used. This wire is paid out rapidly from a small drum, controlled by a simple break, composed of a cord (passing one and a half times around the drum) fixed at one end, and a weight of seven pounds at the other. It is easily and quickly drawn up, contrasting most advantageously in this respect with the old method; and the steel is preserved from rusting by the use of powdered lime, or by working the drum in oil.

THE MANUFACTURE of false eyes is a business of considerable importance in Paris. The average sale of glass eyes is four hundred per week. The ordinary charge is about two Louis for an eye.

Communications to the Editor should be addressed to the Office, 19, Tavistock-street, Covent-garden, W. C.

Contributions should be legibly written, and only on one side of each leaf.

Terms of Subscription to ONCE A WEEK, free by post:—Weekly Numbers for Six Months, 5s. 5d.; Monthly Parts, 5s. 8d.

ONCE A WEEK

NEW SERIES.

No. 348.

August 29, 1874

Price 2d.

JACK'S SISTER; OR, WOMANLY PAST QUESTION.

CHAPTER XLIII.

CONCLUSION.



IT is three years and three months since the day of Merle's death. Aunt Jane has followed him since then, carried away quite suddenly, after a short and painless illness; and somehow, little winsome or cheering as

was the old maid in life, Enid misses sadly the trim, attenuated figure, and the wrinkled face out of which those sharp eyes used to look so watchfully. She even misses the dry, accented voice which had said so many disagreeable things in its day. It had sounded wonderfully soft when it bade God bless and reward the niece who had watched over her failing years. And Enid always thinks of the blessing now, and not of the disagreeables.

Jack is growing stouter, and his whiskers are bigger. He is a county magistrate already, and has been invited to stand for Marshton Fallows at the next election. Enid privately thinks he will. He has not asked her advice, of course—"Girls can't understand anything about business, you know;" but he has talked it over to her, and she highly approves, and thinks that he stands a fair chance of being returned without any opposition at all—so popular has the young banker, with his downright honesty and bluff, good-natured face, become in his

native town and county. Indeed, the neighbours—who, by the way, have all forgiven Enid long ago—are never tired of praising Jack to her, deploring his rooted insensibility to female charms, and assuring her that he need have no fear of being defeated at the polling bar, as the only man who could have rivalled him—Mr. Clifton Gore, the young and noted barrister—has steadily refused to come forward, and is backing his old schoolfellow with all his father's interest.

Yes, Clif has gone in for the bar. Though forgiven by his parents almost as soon as the news of Baby's death reached them, he has steadily refused to return to the old pleasure-going, do-nothing life of his bachelorhood; and though Lady Gore is disappointed, because she misses her darling's society, and Sir Henry because it obliges him to waste more time on his wife, the young man has held firm to his resolution, and has already made a name in his profession; while one or two more of those "attacks" have rather quieted down the gay baronet, and made him more content to depend on the love and company of the still beautiful woman who took him for better or worse thirty years ago.

Jack and Clif are greater friends than ever, and, though separated, keep up quite a furious correspondence whenever either has anything of interest on hand. Jack, indeed, not unfrequently runs up to London to see his friend, and Clif has twice carried him off for a summer's holiday in Norway and Scotland. You would never guess that there had once been a break in their friendship, but for one thing, one circumstance, which makes a great impression on Enid.

Never, not once, since that day when she came between him and Baby in the ripened corn, have her eyes met his, or her hand touched that which used to clasp it so warmly.

She wonders why, sometimes—wonders if

he has a grudge against her, that he will not come to the house in which she is, or accept any invitations to the old town, where he would be likely to meet her; for that the invitations have been given and refused she knows, though not the why and wherefore. And this little mystery is one of the few clouds in Enid's peaceful life. She does not like to think that one who was always so dear to her, and whom she has long forgiven, should dislike her enough to shun his friend's house; and yet she can hardly believe in the dislike either, though an unconscious delicacy of feeling prevents her from questioning Jack, or avowing her desire to see that bright, winning face about them again.

People have begun to set Enid down for an old maid now, for she has refused two good offers since Merle's death, which is more than can be said of the Miss Delamaynes, who, rather peaky and passée, are "going the pace" as briskly as though the fates of Leonora and Baby had given them no warning; and whom irreverent youths speak of as "those awful Delamayne girls, always on the scent, and never at the find." Now and then she thinks a little anxiously whether her living at home so much is not rather a clog on Jack, preventing him from entertaining Cliff and those jolly bachelor friends as freely as he might but for her unchaperoned presence. It is not quite a pleasant thought, but it will come; for, kind and affectionate as Jack is—the very best of brothers—she knows that he is not a man to whom the presence of a woman about him is necessary. He is very fond of her, and he likes to have her with him; but he could live without her or any of her sex. And the knowledge is a little saddening to a young lady who is never so happy as when she is devoting herself to the happiness of some one else. She does not even fire up when she is scolded for her inveterate spinsterhood by Mrs. Lovejoy, who, being now the mother of three boys, while her husband is still a curate only, has renounced Brown's chignons for her own thinned ringlets, and replaced "ducksy darling" by the shorter form of "Mr. L." when addressing the lord of her bosom.

Lady Gore does not scold Enid. She writes often to her in the most loving and intimate manner—letters which make the girl feel as if she was not quite motherless after all; and whenever the elder lady is at

the Hall, Enid is seldom away from it, and the two talk from morning till night. The subject is rather monotonous, perhaps, being chiefly compressed under the one head, "Clifton;" but Lady Gore loves to tell of the young man's talents and perseverance, of his untiring energy and unblemished reputation—more especially of his almost stern avoidance of anything in the least approaching to that old habit of flirtation which had been his besetting sin before the unfortunate marriage in which it culminated.

"He cannot help being bright and winning," the mother would say, while Enid listened, not uninterested; "but he will not let himself be drawn into gaieties or intimacies which will in the least interfere with his daily work; and when in society, he generally chooses the married women to devote himself to. Yet every one loves and pets him just the same. Is it not strange, Enid?"

And Enid says, "Yes," rather abstractedly.

In sober truth, she does not think it strange at all. What she is wondering now is, whether he only avoids her because she is not a married woman; and why, in all these three years, Lady Gore should never have noticed that avoidance, though she has more than once alluded to Jack's generous forgiveness with genuine and grateful warmth.

That is very strange.

She has been thinking about it all this morning—a lovely morning in early June, bright and glowing as that on which Cliff's eyes first told her of his love; thinking of it and other more housewifely matters as she sits in her old place under the great walnut tree on the lawn, with the sunlight flickering among the myriad cones of pinky white blossom above, and the fresh, flower-scented breeze rumpling little loose locks about her grave young head, and blowing whole armaments of tiny, snow-white cloudlets across the dome of dazzling summer sky. The elections are to come off next week, and she will be too busy for day-dreams; for the Cedars will be full of guests—a married cousin and his wife, Ned White (Jack's old college chum), and his wife and brother, the luckless Jones, and a clever London lawyer—not Mr. Middlemist—without a wife. These cousins are occupying Enid's mind at present. They have been pressing

her to pay them a visit for a long time, and she thinks after the elections she will do so. Jack will be more busy than ever then, and want her less. Perhaps he may—

A step upon the lawn; and she looks up. Jack himself, breaking up her meditation by coming towards her with hasty strides, which knocked showers of bright rose petals from every intrusive branch which stayed his path. What clusters of roses there are this year! But one needn't knock them about quite so roughly, all the same.

"Enid," he says, abruptly, as she greets him with her bright, sunny smile, "the house will be pretty full with all these people; but if you don't mind my moving to poor Merle's little room for the time, we could stow another guest, I think."

"Yes, certainly, dear," she says, promptly, and, he is glad to see, with no flinching at the idea. "Who is it? Some London friend of yours?"

"Yes, and the one I care more for than all the rest—Clifton Gore."

Her heart beats quick, and the soft colour rises to her cheek. He is coming at last, then.

And yet, though she is so glad, she cannot speak. Only when Jack asks, rather gruffly—

"Well, are you vexed? Do you mind seeing him?"

She says, "Oh! no," with a little panting breath, and a glance of her dark, liquid eyes which fully endorses her acquiescence.

"I have wanted him to come before," Jack went on, speaking with unwonted gravity, "but he refused. Though the past was blotted out between us two, he said he was unworthy to take your hand, or accept your friendship, till, by steady years of honest work, and a life which I, who have seen it, could own was pure and upright enough to redeem that which is gone, he had purchased back some part of your esteem, and could make you feel that the love he offered you once was not the insult it seemed later, but what it was, and has been ever since—the best part of his nature, and the mainspring of all his good in the future. These are his words, Enid, and I know them to be true ones. Now I have told them to you, you can decide. Is he to come?"

Her face was all one glow of bright transparent colour, lighting up brow, eyes, and lips with a tender, tremulous glory beyond all else. Under the green, flickering leaves, and on to the green, waving grass her work

fell unheeded; and the slim white hands went out with a sort of mute, appealing gesture—

"Do you wish it, Jack?"

He stooped and kissed her—

"Yes, dear old girl, I do. You have been the best of sisters to me; but if any man is worthy of you, I think he is—now. Be kind to him if you can."

He moved aside as he spoke; and she, looking up with shy, beaming eyes of great, wondering joy, saw, where Jack had been, the waving golden hair and gallant face of her early hero, heard the old winning voice asking—

"Enid, can you listen to me now?"

And felt her hands taken in a close, firm clasp, which seemed to enfold, not only them, but her whole being with a sense of love and guardianship such as she had never known. Not one word she said; but she looked up to him with the trusting confidence of a child shining through soft, unbidden tears; and Clif understood her. The next moment his arms were round her, and the gentle head which had borne so many a care was drawn down on to a heart which might be safely trusted to prize and cherish her, even as she deserved, for evermore.

THE END.

IN THE FAR SOUTH.

THE weather was beautiful, a mellow autumn day, with a reminiscence of summer in its genial warmth. The cleft summit of Mount Sarmiento was clear against the sky, and its snow-fields, swept over by alternate light and shadow, seemed full of soft undulations. Cloven peaks are, by the way, a common feature of mountains in the Straits of Magellan, as we afterwards found. Such were our surroundings for three delightful weeks. On the particular afternoon in question we were bound to the bay of Port Famine, where we anchored before sunset. Its name recalls the sad history of the men who landed there nearly three centuries ago, and watched and waited for help that never came. I do not know whether the slight vestiges of ruined buildings, and the moss-grown cannon still to be found on a height above the bay, mark the site of Sarmiento's ill-fated colony, but they naturally associate themselves with the old tradition. The beach at Port Famine is lined with singularly re-

gular but completely upturned strata, their edges either worn down or cut to one level, so as to be almost even with each other. As we returned to the ship that evening, the moon was just rising over the brow of the hill, and her light rippled across the still water, side by side with the red reflection from a huge fire built by our sailors on the beach. Sailors have a cheery affection for an open air fire. Perhaps it recalls home, and the domestic, cosy side of life, so far removed from the fore-castle. Whatever be the reason, our men were never on shore for half an hour without building a glorious structure of drift-wood and dry branches, laid with such art that it was a pleasure to see the blaze creep through and finally burst in triumph from the top.

The great event of the next day was the rounding of Cape Froward, a huge mass of rock thrown out in a bold promontory from the north side of Froward Reach. So close did we coast along, that the geology was quite legible, even in detail, from the deck of our vessel. The contorted strata forming the base of Cape Froward's rugged cliffs; the rounded shoulders of the mountains, in marked contrast to their peaked and jagged crests; the general character of the snow-fields and glaciers, not crowded into narrow valleys, but spread out on the open slopes of the loftier ranges, or fitted dome-like over their single summits; all these features passed constantly before us in an ever-shifting panorama. One of the most beautiful points in the view was a huge twin glacier, or rather a glacier single in its origin but divided at its lower end by a mountain spur. In the afternoon we passed Cape Holland, another very bold and striking headland, and anchored in Fortesque Bay early enough to have several hours of daylight before us. In this sheltered harbour, with Mount Cross for a breastwork against the west winds, we found ourselves in a different climate from the one in which we had passed the morning, with a strong breeze blowing dead against us.

We spent the remainder of the day in wandering along the rocky, pebbly beach; penetrating sometimes, though on account of the under-bush but for a little way, among the trees. Here I first saw the wild fuchsia in full bloom, growing along the shore in large banks as thick and abundant as those of the mountain-laurel in New England.

We came upon a Fuegian hut on the

beach. We often saw their deserted camps afterwards, but they never differed from this first specimen. Dwellings they can scarcely be called. A few flexible branches are stuck in the ground in a semicircle, and their ends are drawn together so as to form a kind of hood in the shape of a chaise-top. It is too low for any posture but that of squatting or lying down. In front is always a scorched spot, on which a handful of fire has smouldered; at one side is invariably a large heap of empty shells, showing that the natives had occupied this spot until they had exhausted the supply of mussels—their favourite, or at least their principal, food. We had already met Fuegian Indians in their canoes. The very day before, as we left Port Famine, a boat containing three men and two women had put off from a spot we had been watching with some interest, because a smoke on the edge of the wood, and a few figures moving about, indicated a camp. They showed no disposition to come on board, but seemed rather by their gestures inviting us to pay them a visit—pointing to their fires, and frantically waving skins, which no doubt they wished to barter for tobacco, though their wild shrieks and shouts were then unintelligible to us. One would hardly believe that five human beings could make so much noise.

One of the men, the more prominent spokesman (though where all screamed in unison it was difficult to give pre-eminence to any), was decently dressed in a flannel shirt and drawers. The others were scarcely clad at all, unless scant skirts hanging loose from their shoulders could be called clothing. The women were naked to the waist; their babies were lashed to them, leaving them free to paddle lustily with both arms and nurse their children at the same time. Their boats are usually of their own making, and one can only wonder that people ingenious enough to make bark canoes so neatly and strongly put together, and so well modelled, should have invented nothing better in the way of a house than a twig hut, compared with which a wigwam is an elaborate building; and that they should not provide themselves with a covering for warmth, if not for decency, in a climate where snow and rain are the rule rather than the exception.

The next morning, as we steamed out of our snug anchorage, the snow-fields, spite of heavy clouds behind us, lay glittering on the mountains like purest marble in the early

light. They were dazzling to look upon. The weather improved as we went on, and indeed we congratulated ourselves upon having in this unkind climate a day when freakish, capricious sunshine, like a moody artist, brought out bits of landscape here and there, while from time to time a rainbow's broken arch fell through a drifting fleece of clouds.

We sailed prosperously along through this beautiful scenery till about three o'clock in the afternoon; but the fitful promise of the morning betrayed us in the end. The wind, which had been strong all day, and coming upon us in gusts, increased with sudden fury. Rushing through the narrow tunnel in which we were caught, it seemed to gather strength and speed in proportion to its compression. I had never imagined such a tumult of the elements. In an inconceivably short time the channel was lashed into a white foam, the roar of wind and water was so great you could not hear yourself speak, though the hoarse shout of command and the answering cry of the sailors rose above the storm. To add to the confusion, a loose sail cracked as if it would tear itself in pieces, with that sharp, angry, rending sound which only a broad spread of loose canvas can make. It became impossible to hold our own against the amazing power of the blast, and the captain turned the vessel round with the intention of putting her into Borja Bay, not far from which, by good fortune, we chanced to be. As she came broadside to the wind in turning, it seemed to my inexperience that she must be blown over, so violently did she careen. Once safely round, we flew before the wind, which now helped as much as it had hindered, and were soon abreast of Borja Bay. Never was there a more sudden transition from chaos to peace, than the one we made as we turned out of the main channel into its quiet waters—a somewhat difficult manœuvre under the circumstances, for a driving cloud of mist and rain now enveloped us. Our ship almost filled the tiny harbour, shut in between mountains; and there we lay safe and sheltered, in breathless quiet, while a few yards from us the storm raged and howled outside. These frequent, almost land-locked coves are the safety of navigators in these straits; but after this day's experience it was easy to understand how sailing vessels may be kept waiting for months between two such

harbours, struggling vainly to make a few miles, and constantly driven back by sudden squalls.

The next morning fresh snow lay on the mountains around us, and we were still detained in our harbour by inclement weather. Spite of the storm, two of our companions ascended the peak on the side of the bay. They found the same smoothed and rounded surfaces which we had observed along our whole route to a height of fifteen hundred feet, above which the rocks were broken and rugged. From the brink of the snow-covered ridge on which they stood, they saw below them a cup-shaped depression holding two little lakes, and looking singularly green and peaceful as seen from the upper region of gusts, snow, and rain in which they found themselves. These lakes fed a pretty cascade, which poured over the rocks at the side of our vessel. In Borja Bay we made our first acquaintance with the so-called "Williwaws" of the straits. A "Williwaw" is a curious phenomenon to the inexperienced. All may be quiet, not a breath stirring; suddenly a gust strikes the ship, and she is shaken for a moment from mast-head to keel, as if in a giant's grasp, and almost before you have time to feel the shock the wind has passed, vanished into the calm out of which it came, leaving all still again.

We were tempted to turn into Chorocua Bay by Captain Mayne's mention of a glacier descending into the water. There is a large glacier in sight above it on the western side, though not directly accessible, as we hoped to find it. Notwithstanding this disappointment, we rejoiced that we had entered this bay, for it is singularly beautiful. Deep gorges open on either side, bordered by steep, richly wooded cliffs, and overhung by ice and snow-fields on loftier heights. Where these channels lead, into what dim recesses of ocean and mountain, it is impossible to say, for within them, so far as I know, no one has penetrated. The weather was most friendly to us. Chorocua Bay, with all its adjoining inlets and fiords, was glassy still; only the swift steamer ducks, as they shot across, broke the surface of the water with their arrowy wake. Quiet as in a church, voices and laughter seemed an intrusion, and a shout came back to us in repeated echoes, dying away at last in far-off, hidden retreats.

The next day we divided forces. Bota-

nists, zoölogists, sportsmen, and sundry non-descripts, such as Mrs. Johnson and myself, landed on the beach at about six o'clock in the morning, taking with us a tent, deck-blankets, lunch, everything needful, in short, to make us comfortable for half a day's sojourn, with possible vicissitudes of weather. The vessel put out into the straits again with the rest of the party, for the purpose of making soundings and dredgings in the neighbourhood of Cape Tamar.

Following a creek of fresh water that ran out upon the sands, we came to a romantic brook, forming a miniature cascade and rushing down through a gorge bordered by old moss-grown trees, and full of large boulders, around which the water surged and rippled. This gorge was a haunt of ferns and lichens carpeting all its nooks and corners. We traced the brook to a small lake lying some half a mile behind the beach. The collections made along the shore were numerous, and included a great variety of animals. Among them were star-fishes, volutas, sea-urchins, sea-anemones, medusæ, doris, and small fishes from the tide-pools, beside a number drawn in the seine.

Towards the middle of the day we all strayed in one by one from our wanderings, and assembled around or within the tent for lunch. All luxuries and superfluities had long dropped off from our larder; mussels roasted on the shell, salt pork broiled on a stick, and hard-tack, formed our frugal meal; but, such as it was, we were called upon to share it with a numerous company. A boat rounded the point of the beach, and as it approached we saw that it was full of Indians—men, women, and children. The men landed (they were five or six in number) and came towards us. I had wished to have a near view of the Fuegians; but I confess that, when my desire was gratified, my first feeling was one of utter repulsion and disgust. I have seen many Indians, both in North and South America, the wild Sioux of the West, and various tribes of the Amazons, but I had never seen any so coarse or repulsive as these; they had not even the physical strength and manliness of the savage to atone for brutality of expression. Almost naked (for the short, loose skins tied around the neck and hanging from the shoulders could hardly be called clothing), with swollen bodies, thin limbs, and stooping forms, with a childish yet cunning leer on their faces, they crouched over

our fire, spreading their hands towards its genial warmth, and all shouting at once—"Tabac, tabac," and "Galleta"—biscuit. We had no tobacco with us, but we gave them the remains of our hard bread and pork, which they seemed glad to have. Then the one who appeared, from the deference paid him by the rest, to be chief, sat down on a stone, and sang in a singular kind of monotone.

When he finished we were silent with a sort of surprise and expectancy; his blank, disappointed expression reminded us to applaud, and then he laughed with pleasure, imitated the clapping in an awkward way, and began to sing again. I do not know how long this scene might have lasted, for the man seemed to have no thought of stopping, and the flow of words were uninterrupted; but the *Hassler* came in sight, her recall gun was fired, and we hastened down to the beach landing. Our guests followed us, still clamorously demanding tobacco; and we signed to them that they might follow us on board the vessel, where they would get some.

We reached the ship first, but they presently came alongside, still shouting and shrieking, without pause and in every key, "Tabac, tabac," "Galleta, galleta." We threw them down both, and they seized upon them like wild animals. From the fierceness with which they snatched at whatever was thrown into the boat, it seemed that each one was the owner of what he could catch, and that there was no community of goods. I threw down some showy beads and bright calico to the women, who seemed pleased, though I doubt their knowing what to do with the latter. They wore a coarse kind of amulet, made of shells tied in a string around the neck, so that the beads would certainly come in play. They had some idea of trade and barter, for when they found they had received all the tobacco and biscuit they were likely to get gratuitously, they held up bows and arrows, wicker baskets, birds, and the large sea-urchin, which is an article of food with them. Before we parted from our friends, they seemed to me more human than when I first saw them. Indeed, the faces of one or two were neither brutal nor ugly.

So we parted. I looked after them as they paddled away, wondering anew at the strange problem of a people who learn nothing even from their own wants, necessi-

ties, and sufferings. They wander unclothed and homeless in snow, and mist, and rain, as they have done for ages, asking of the land only a strip of beach, and a handful of fire, of the ocean shell-fish enough to save them from starvation.

THE ELDERLY LOVER.

I WAS travelling, just five years ago last spring, among the mountains of Delaware County, when, in going down one of the steep hills of that region, my good horse Bob met with an ugly accident, which laid him up for a couple of weeks. It was in a quiet, lonely part of the country, several miles from any village. Just below the spot where the mischance befell, I saw a cluster of three or four buildings, towards which Bob and I hobbled as best we could. There was a cheerful, better class farmhouse on one side of the road, on the other a smithy, and what might be the smith's cottage. There I found quite a good farrier, with a little barn, in which Bob was made comfortable. What was I to do myself? was the next question. I was too fond of my trusty nag to leave him. In no particular hurry to move on, and finding there was good trout fishing in a mountain stream close at hand, I resolved to take up my quarters near Bob and his barn. But where? The smith's little cottage was already full to overflowing. He had not even a garret to spare. Sleeping in a barn would scarcely suit a youngster of threescore and five. I looked inquiringly across the road at the neat country house, with its pleasant surroundings—the modest piazza, the row of noble elms, the flower beds, and the pretty paddock. The house struck my fancy. To my notion, every house has an individual expression, a countenance of its own, as much as the man who lives in it. Strut and pretension are written over many a doorway, solid respectability and good sense over many more; simple comfort salutes you here, cheerfulness and good taste smile upon you there; while careless neglect or wild extravagance varies the picture. Now, the house before me had a taking expression.

"Who lives yonder?" was my question.

"The widow Jones," was Smith's answer.

"Would the widow Jones be likely to take me as a lodger for a week or two?"

Smith shook his head—couldn't say—didn't think it likely. The old lady was

infirm; lived alone most of the time, with a young girl to take care of her. Smith's son worked the place, slept in the house at night. They didn't see much company, on account of the old lady's health.

I hesitated a moment, then boldly entered the gate, and knocked at the door.

Presently the door opened, and the bright young face of a pretty girl of seventeen appeared before me. So neat, so sweet, so simple—nothing flaunting or fly-away about her—so fresh, so pleasant, so modest, her whole aspect charmed me. There was something about her that commanded my respect. Quite unconsciously I took off my hat, and bowed my iron-grey head before her.

"Mrs. Jones lives here, I believe?"

"Yes, sir," with a pleasant half-smile of surprise.

"Can I see her for a moment?"

The smile was blended with a little doubt. There was delay in the answer.

"Perhaps you are the lady's granddaughter?"

"Oh, no, sir! I am only her servant-girl;" with a little blush on the round, healthy cheek, and the rosy lips parting with a smile that showed beautiful fresh teeth.

The quiet simplicity of the answer charmed me. Before I could speak I was invited in, and shown into a parlour—dark, chilly, shut up, and stiff-looking, like most state apartments in the country. I had full leisure to admire every cold bit of furniture in the room. Fortunately, a window had been opened, and the spring breeze came in, or I might have been stifled. A quarter of an hour passed, when the same young face appeared, and I was invited across the hall into a very different-looking room, all cheerful comfort, where, seated in a large arm-chair, I saw the lady of the house, the widow Jones. Her whole appearance was thoroughly respectable, and even attractive, in spite of rheumatism. She looked surprised, as my young friend had done, apologized for not rising, and invited me to a seat near her own. Mine was rather a delicate negotiation. It was a bold step for a strange wayfarer to storm the castle of an infirm and aged widow lady after this impromptu fashion. But I told my tale with the best grace I could, and was received with a simple, cordial hospitality which my boldness scarcely deserved. The guest-chamber was made ready, the stranger made welcome, and in another hour I was sitting opposite

Mrs. Jones at the neatest little old-fashioned tea table you ever saw, with a dainty little supper before me. The young girl waited on us, with a sweetness and a sort of innocent rustic friendliness that were far more agreeable to me than the studied graces of the most accomplished waiter at Delmonico's. Although charmingly neat-handed, I am happy to say her name was neither Phyllis, nor Imogen, nor Clytemnestra. It was Hannah. After tea, in the course of a gossiping chat, Mrs. Jones and I discovered that if not old friends, we had a right to be so, for we both knew a score of the same worthy people at Albany and Binghamton. Nine o'clock came only too soon. Then there was a little hesitation; then I was invited to officiate as chaplain at family prayers—a duty I discharged with much pleasure. I remember that Hannah sang an evening hymn with a very sweet voice, but with some shakes and quavers that were not in the tune. When we shook hands at parting, Mrs. Jones and I parted like old friends; and when I took from Hannah's honest working hand—no ring on it—a beautiful country-made candle—no hateful kerosene lamp—I could not help giving her a fatherly blessing, which she received very prettily.

Well, I never passed a pleasanter fortnight in my life. There was excellent trout fishing in the brook winding through the farm—Wildbrook, as Hannah called it—and I also carried on my geological hammering in a very satisfactory way. I was happy as any schoolboy. Mrs. Jones, on further acquaintance, proved to be a woman of great natural intelligence, with a good share of information; while, in spite of rheumatism, she had a most happy, cheery temper. She was truly a charming old lady, some ten years my senior. I may as well confess it—I fell in love with her. It is a fashion of mine to be all the time falling in love. During the last thirty years I have had many, many touches of the tender passion, with great satisfaction to myself and no harm to the object. Mine are loves in which there are no agonies, no ravings, no green-eyed monsters, but a constant succession of the most pleasurable emotions in the world. I am thankful that I am an old bachelor. It is only your old bachelor of the right stamp who can indulge in such loves. They are critical for young men. Married men have attachments of their own. Old maids, poor creatures, cannot well indulge in tender

affections for a score of gentlemen, old and young—they would be hooted at if they did; but they generally give away their hearts to nephews and nieces and babies innumerable. Such, at least, is the way of my dear sister Mehitable, three years my senior. But to return to my affection for the widow Jones. It prospered charmingly: my loves always prosper. The attachment was, I flatter myself, mutual, with this difference, that on my part it had been love at first sight. I was smitten in the moment of first meeting those friendly old eyes, of first hearing that pleasant old voice. With the widow Jones it required, I fear, ten days of hospitality and friendly intercourse to produce the same happy results. Of course I fell in love with Hannah too. In fact, Hannah was quite irresistible. I defy any man to be in the house with Hannah ten days without being in love one way or another. If she was not a rustic belle, it was only because she was too modest, too busy, and too entirely absorbed in devotion to her kind friend, Mrs. Jones. Smith's curly-headed son was evidently desperately in love with her. I felt some jealous twinges on that score. I observed that his plough seemed always to head in the direction of Hannah's kitchen, no matter from what point of the compass it started. I did not admire Smith's son myself. He had not the honest, hard-working look of his father. He sported too many studs, too much watch chain—all sham, of course. And one evening he came home with more than one drop too much under that watch chain. Now I had seen Hannah blush when speaking of Smith's son—how lovely she looked, too, at the time! I was troubled: girls so often make foolish choices. If this were not the case, should I not have been married forty years ago? Should I now be wasting my sweetness on the desert air? I fancied Mrs. Jones was uneasy about Smith's son. One evening she began talking to me very freely about Hannah.

"I love that girl as if she were my grandchild. My own little ones died young. I feel it my duty to watch over Hannah as faithfully as if she was my own. She is a good girl. I believe she really loves me."

I assured Mrs. Jones that Hannah's affection for her was evident. It was a beautiful sight to see this young girl hovering about the old lady's chair, with such pleasant, loving ways and words. It was worth travelling from Dan to Beersheba to see that

living picture. Then Mrs. Jones told me Hannah had been more than once tempted away by the offer of higher wages than she could afford to give, and by the prospect of bettering herself in life.

"You may be easy on that score, ma'am," was my answer. "Your motherly kindness, and the careful home education you have given her, are worth more than heaps of gold to Hannah."

"Hannah seems to feel so; and if I were not sure that it is more for the child's real good to be living here, I should be the first to tell her to go. I only hope Smith's son won't carry her off."

So did I, most heartily. Another week of felicity with my two lady-loves, and I was compelled to go. It was hard to say whether sweetness or sorrow was the strongest emotion, as I gave the rheumatic hand of Mrs. Jones a grip which made her wince, and at the next moment almost kissed Hannah's rosy cheek—almost, not quite, however. In the expression of the master passion, I flatter myself that I am as respectful towards the object as Sir Charles Grandison himself. Bob and I trotted slowly along the valley, feeling that we had lost our hearts irrevocably. But we were cheered by a distant glimpse of the widow Jones and Hannah waving their handkerchiefs to us as we passed out of sight, and by remembering that we were invited to return to Wildbrook for more fishing, hammering, and flirting.

As for the dudgeon of my lawyer's office—the pranks of sundry nephews and nieces—the worries of their uncle—let us pass them over. Let us annihilate time and space—let us return to Wildbrook.

"All well, Smith?" I asked, as I chanced to meet my friend the blacksmith half a mile from the farm.

"Usually well, sir," replied Smith, with a friendly bob and grin.

"There must be great improvement in Mrs. Jones," thought I, "if she is usually well."

But in truth I knew the meaning of that country phrase. No doubt my lady-love was well as usual—and no better. In ten minutes more I was, not in the arms, but metaphorically at the feet of my mistresses. In fact, I was more at their feet than ever, they made so much of me. There was no end to the tender affections lavished on me. Ahem! Dainty little dishes, exactly to my taste, prepared by Hannah's skilful hands. The most

charming little nosegay, fresh every day, on the table in my room—flowers gathered by Hannah, and prettily arranged by the widow Jones, as I well knew. There were forget-me-nots, pansies, rosebuds, and all kinds of sentimental blossoms. Excellent sport, too, in Wildbrook, and various successful expeditions among the rocks with my hammer.

To my great joy, I also discovered that Smith's son had vanished, sham watch chain, studs, and all. But we all know that the course of true love is too much like that of Wildbrook—tossing, and foaming, and fretting among the stony barriers that beset its path. I found another rival in the field. The widow Jones was, I humbly hoped, still faithful: neither doctor nor dominie visited her more frequently than in the past. But, alas! I was by no means so sure of Hannah. A tall, lank, red-headed, awkward-looking chap had taken the place of Smith's son at the plough, in the kitchen, and at Hannah's feet. His name was Hiram Jenks. At the first interview I despised Hiram Jenks. I rated him very cheap. Hannah would assuredly never smile on such a red-headed hop-pole as that. But the same evening the scales fell from my eyes. I discovered that not only with Hannah, but with the widow Jones also, Hiram Jenks was a fearfully dangerous rival to your humble servant!

Hiram could write Mrs. Jones's business letters as well as myself; and Hiram could milk better than any man or maid in those parts. Hiram could carry Mrs. Jones, chair and all, a quarter of a mile if she chose, and had actually carried her to the foot of the garden. Hiram lifted the clothes basket for Hannah, filled bucket and boiler, and, in short, was a perfect Ferdinand to this fair Miranda. Hiram had got the prize for a rare lily, and also one for the fattest pig in Delaware County. Hens, chickens, ducks, geese, horses, cows, oxen, cats, dogs, birds, and bees, all prospered under Hiram's care. So I was told. I was sick of the fellow's name before I had been twenty-four hours in the house. Hiram could sing—occasionally joined Hannah in the evening hymn. Hiram could play on the flute! One fact I was told in confidence by Mrs. Jones, whispered in a corner, which added the last drop to the cup of jealousy I was thus compelled to quaff: Hiram was a school-teacher in disguise, and all for the love of Hannah! My grizzly locks stood on end with dismay. Hiram had given up a first-

class district school, and followed the oxen, to bask in the sunshine of Hannah's smile.

Here was a rival indeed! Here was romance! What chance had I? What could the poor visitor do in the way of disguise and sacrifice? I had a nightmare on the subject, in which Hiram and I figured in a grand duello, armed with scythes, fighting à l'outrance in the widow's barn, while Hannah sat on one of the oxen, and Mrs. Jones on the other, both laughing at us. It is said that troubles never come singly. This second visit to Wildbrook was decidedly not so happily peaceful as the first. I had not been there a week when there was an invasion of the farm. Two young girls made a raid upon us—two cousins of Hannah's, her nearest relatives, I was told. They were what I call rowdy young ladies—pert, pretentious, and boisterous. Cousins, indeed! That impudent assertion will require clear proof before I can believe it. Cousins far removed, certainly, if cousins at all. One was Adelina, the other Rosabella. They descended upon the farmhouse in a maze of skirts, flounces, flowers, frippery, false hair, beads, buckles, and paint. Pert, giggling, rattling creatures they were, without one real charm of girlhood. They made broad love to Hiram, and even tried their weapons on me.

Rosabella was a factory girl somewhere. Adelina came from a "dollar store" somewhere. Hiram and I were thrown closer together by this invasion. He drove me up the mountains in quest of geological specimens, and piloted me to fresh fishing waters. My first antipathy to the fellow abated. I forgot my jealousy, and learned to do my rival some justice. And the cement of this new friendship was, I am sorry to say, vituperation of the young ladies, Rosabella and Adelina.

"They aint fit to hold a candle to her. And I suppose you know, sir, what their errand is?"

"Mischief, I warrant," was my sententious reply.

"Mischief all over," was his answer. "They want to get her away from Wildbrook. They tell her she is a servant-girl here. That's no news. Hannah knows she is a servant-girl: we all know it. They want to get her out of this safe, respectable home, and put her behind a counter in Albany, with half the men in the town to stare at her."

Crack! whack! went the whip, with such

force that our steed made a plunge, and we should have upset and rolled down the precipice together—a lamentable end to two of Hannah's adorers—but luckily Hiram could not only milk a cow, he could rein in a horse as well.

This little ebullition having relieved the lad's spirits, he quieted down again, and resumed the conversation.

"I say Hannah's too good for that, sir."

"Indeed she is. She is as good a girl as ever lived; much too good, too pretty, and too innocent to play the show-piece behind any counter. She is a dear little home bird. She must stay at Wildbrook until some one builds a cozy nest especially for her. He will be a lucky fellow that gets her."

"I guess he will," replied Hiram, with a tremendous amount of suppressed emotion, intently studying a tall mullein on his own private side of the road, but I could see that neck and ears were as red as his head. He seemed all aflame. I couldn't have got up such a blush as that for Hannah—not for the last forty years or so. Heigho!

"I wouldn't take a wife out of such a lot as Rosabella and Adelina belong to—no, not if she had twenty thousand dollars in her pocket!" observed Hiram, with great energy.

"Softly, my friend," I interposed, with the calmness becoming my grizzly locks. "There are ever so many good girls in factories, as we all know, and in 'dollar stores,' too, let us hope."

"I beg pardon, sir; that wasn't my meaning. I wouldn't say a harsh word against any honest woman's calling. That's not my way. But them girls at the farm do aggravate me. When I said a lot of girls like them, I meant girls that are all strings and streamers, and false hair and artificials; girls that haven't got a mite of common sense, that haven't got any heart in 'em; girls that are too stuck up to be servants to an honourable old lady like Mrs. Jones."

"That's a very poor lot of girls, indeed," was my reply. "I quite agree with you there. If a young girl has to earn her living, she is better off in a respectable family, under a woman who is kind to her and feels a real interest in her, than in the best factory or the best dollar store in the land. It is a more healthy kind of life for body and soul."

"That's true, I'm sure," exclaimed Hiram, with emphasis. "You couldn't see a healthier-

looking girl than Hannah from Maine to Texas. Just look at them two girls alongside of her! Pish!"

"And the best of it is, she has got a healthy heart, my boy. That's an article that is home-made. You can't make a healthy heart without God's blessing on ever so much home work. Mrs. Jones has done more for Hannah in that way than if she had given her a million in money. She has given the child something very like good mother's love."

"That she has, sir. I'll say that for the widow Jones. It's a sight to see them two together; Hannah nursing her and waiting on her, and thinking for her and working for her, and Mrs. Jones looking so smiling and pleasant at Hannah."

"It's a sight for sore eyes, my friend. Ay, and there they are now, sitting together on the piazza, Hannah reading aloud, and Mrs. Jones knitting. Mrs. Jones is knitting me a pair of socks, Hiram, and Hannah is to mark them—ahem!"

But Hiram's faculties were absorbed by the tableau on the piazza. He did not heed my boast about the stockings. He did not heed the gate-post. We just missed upsetting. My two lady-loves gave a little scream each. They were nearly perfect, but they were women: they would give little screams once in a while. Not too good, you know, for human nature's daily food, &c.

In another hour I was summoned to New York by a telegram. Three months passed away among scenes and people very different from Wildbrook and its inhabitants. Then came a little note from Hannah:—

"DEAR SIR—I am sorry to say this is to tell you that Mrs. Jones has enjoyed very poor health for seven weeks. She would like to have you come to Wildbrook to settle some business for her, if you could find it convenient. She has been dreadful sick some days. My heart aches about her. She is so thin I can lift her like a babe. It makes me feel dreadful bad. Please come very soon. Mrs. Jones sends her kind love. Mr. Jenks"—(scratched out)—"Hiram sends his best respects. So do I.—Very respectfully,

"HANNAH BAILEY."

The next day I was at Wildbrook. My old friend was indeed very ill. She had sent for me to make her will. As she had only a thousand or two in money, with a life

interest in the property, the paper was soon drawn up. There were a few charitable bequests, fifty dollars to Hiram Jenks, with her thanks for his excellent conduct; and then, with a fervent blessing, five hundred dollars to Hannah, "the chief earthly joy and comfort of her last years." She lived only a week longer, and during that week she succeeded in urging Hannah to be married to Hiram without delay. They had been engaged a couple of months. The dominie was sent for, and the ceremony took place at Mrs. Jones's bedside. How dear little Hannah trembled! Hiram's freckled face was as beautifully expressive of honest natural feeling as if he had been an Apollo—or much more so, probably.

A week later, and we carried the good old lady to her last resting-place, beside her husband, in a little enclosure on the bank of the brook.

Hiram and Hannah removed into Chango County, where Mr. Jenks is likely to become a prosperous model farmer. He has made one or two clever inventions, which have given him a reputation. Hannah rules her husband, a great cheese factory, and two lovely babies. No! that last item must be corrected: stern truth compels me to say the babies rule Hannah. I have just passed a fortnight with them, and am a credible witness. Hannah makes a dear young matron. Hiram grows handsome on love and prosperity. The widow Jones—that is, Kitty, the elder girl, bearing the name of our old friend—is a perfect little beauty; Hannah the less would be a beauty but for her sandy hair. Those two damsels are likely to be the last of my lady-loves. Sitting one day in the kitchen watching Mrs. Jenks make a pie for my dinner, and dividing meanwhile my tender attentions very impartially between the little widow Jones on one knee and the little Hannah on the other, it occurred to me to inquire after the cousins.

"How are those young ladies, Rosabella and Adelina?"

Hannah's pretty head drooped. A flush came over her face. Hiram took upon himself to answer—

"Adelina ran away last spring with Smith's son. He has had a couple of other wives already. They are keeping a saloon in Kansas."

"Ay, ay. Sorry to hear it. I hope Rosabella has done better?"

"Rosabella, sir, has gone to the bad."

THE QUEEN'S ENGLISH IN DORSET.

THE renderings of "the Queen's English" given by the respective inhabitants of the different counties in that "right little, tight little island" where her British Majesty has her head-quarters, are many and varied—so varied from the royal original as to afford considerable amusement to the stranger who for the first time listens to the peculiarities of the local idioms and pronunciations. The dialect spoken by the lower class of the London population is well known, being specially distinguished by the dropping of "h'all the h'aitches which h'ought to be h'on, and by the putting of them h'on w'en'h'ever the un'appy letter h'ought to be h'omitted."

From the mincing, niminy-piminy brogue of some Londoners, it is a long step to the broad, racy speech of the honest Dorsetshire peasants, the twists and turns of whose pronunciation are almost beyond alphabetical power to express. The weary harvester, at the close of his day's work, will observe that—

"I da 'low 'tis just about hot to-day, and thick cloud'll bring thunder avore long; but I'll meake haste whome and zee if the beacon an' beans be ready for zupper."

The same respectable person, speaking of his spade, hoe, or any other inanimate article, will refer to it as "he," using the word "her" as the objective case, or in concluding a sentence. Thus—

"Thease here speade be just about a good 'un; he doan't look zif I'd a used her two year—now, do her?"

Indeed, so generally is the masculine pronoun used, as to have given rise to the saying:—

"The Dorsetshire clodhoppers call everything *he* except a tom-cat, and of that they admiringly remark, 'Bean't *she* a purty creatur'?"

The letter *s* is invariably changed into the hard sound of *z*, and the country town of Dorchester is spoken of as "Dodchester." The letter *r* is a great favourite, being appended to every word which will, by any possibility, admit of such an affix. So the young lady rejoicing in the gentle name of Emma will be referred to as "Our Emmer;" Amelia-Anna becomes disguised as "Mil-yer-Anner;" while the sovereign dear to the

warm hearts of the men of Dorset is loyally remembered in toast and cheer as "Good Queen Victorier."

In an old poem written in the Dorsetshire dialect, the author, boasting of a certain magnificent yew tree in his native village, describes old King George's admiration of the same in the elegant lines:

"He zaid, an' I'll tell ee the word that he zaid:
'I'll be bound if you wull zarch my dominions all droo,
You woon't vind the veller to thick there wold yew.'"

Hard-working, frugal, and faithful to his master, the Dorsetshire labourer possesses, under a rough exterior, a large amount of feudal reverence for those whom he has long served; and beneath a somewhat stolid manner, which many strangers have mistaken for stupidity, he hides a wonderful fund of quiet humour and quick rustic wit.

A WOMAN'S WISH.

CHAPTER IV.

THERE were lights within, and the hum of voices reached Mrs. Norris's ear as she reached the porch. Lifting the latch, she entered; but no one perceived her for some minutes. On one side of the fire sat Mrs. Vere, and in front of it stood Luke Warner and his wife, anxiously watching their idiot boy, who crouched at the feet of Elsie, with his face hidden in the folds of her dress, moaning and sobbing in spite of her efforts to soothe him.

The boy appeared to be under the spell of some overwhelming terror, which increased upon him every time any effort was made to ascertain the cause. At last Elsie, who was still so weak that the scene greatly distressed her, wrapped her arms around him, and in low, faltering tones began to sing.

By slow degrees the boy's sobs died away into a low wail, and Mrs. Vere now caught sight of her sister-in-law, to whom Margaret Warner was whispering an explanation.

"Davy had been going on this way for these three hours, and when his father had come home they brought him to Miss Elsie, who could always do more with him than anybody else; but it had been to no purpose till now."

Mrs. Norris scarcely heard her. Walter was not here, and her dread that some

accident had befallen him was growing overwhelming. She appealed, in her agony, to Luke.

"Where can he be? Nothing would have kept him away if he had been safe and well. Come with me to the town. I must find him, alive or dead!"

"Nay, missus," answered the stout labourer, beginning to share her terrors—"you'll just bide here, and let me go alone. I'll not let the grass grow under my feet, 'pend upon it."

Before she could raise any objections, he dashed off on his errand, quitting the cottage just as Elsie gathered the meaning of Mrs. Norris's incoherent sentences. Trying to disengage herself from Davy with one hand, she held out the other to Mrs. Vere, crying distractedly—

"Oh, mother, do you hear?—do you hear? Something has happened to Walter."

The sound of her voice roused the boy Davy, who had been fast falling into a doze. Tossing his arms above his head, he began to writhe upon the floor, shrieking dismally the while, as if seized by a fresh access of the alarm Elsie had just soothed away.

Bewildered by the noise, the young girl knelt down, and raised his head on her knees, bending forward at the same time to catch Mrs. Norris's answer to her sister-in-law's inquiries.

"Walter left home," said his mother, "with the intention of returning by two at the latest."

"He rode the other horse—the new horse," moaned Davy; but no one noticed him.

And Mrs. Norris—all her dislikes forgotten, as she felt that the sympathies of her hearers were with her—went on dwelling upon her suspense and her fears, till she grew faint, and was obliged to let Mrs. Vere and Margaret lead her to a chair.

Elsie would have risen and gone to her aunt's assistance—for was she not the mother of Walter?—but Davy clung to her, exclaiming—

"Don't you be angry with me. I couldn't help it. Brownie was never frightened of me, never!"

A shudder passed through Elsie's weakened frame. Intuitively she began to couple the boy's tale with Walter's disappearance; and she began to question him as well as her chattering teeth would let her.

"Brownie was never afraid of you,

Davy? Did Mr. Norris ride Brownie to Hatcham to-day?"

"No, it was the other horse—the grey one. I didn't mean to frighten him," he added, piteously.

Mrs. Norris began to listen with breathless interest, as Elsie answered—

"No, no, you would not hurt any one, Davy; but did the horse shy?"

Davy nodded, and awkwardly imitated the movements of a startled animal.

"And then did he run away with Mr. Norris? Did he throw his master?" gasped Elsie. "Come and show me where it happened."

But the boy hung back, in spite of her eager entreaties, and the almost equally excited efforts of Mrs. Norris to bribe him into compliance.

"I can't, I daren't!" he said. "I did creep through the hedge and peep over; but he laid so still, and looked so—"

He broke from Elsie, to fly into his mother's arms; and old Nancy, who had been piecing together his admissions, put up her hands.

"Now, the Lord's mercy be upon us all! for the master must be lying in the chalk pit in Darley woods!"

Too much terrified for speech, Margaret Warner rushed away to seek help; and Elsie, forgetting her weakness, would have followed, but Mrs. Vere withheld her.

"Child, you must not! it would kill you! and you could do no good. Stay here and help me to comfort his mother."

Alas! who could do that? Mrs. Norris sat rigidly erect in her chair, conscious of all that was passing, but stunned with the conviction that the punishment of her sin had overtaken her. She had secretly longed for the death of Elsie. Her own boy might even now be lying on the frosty earth, dead or dying, and she could not pray to be spared the bitter trial. She could only say in her soul, "God is just. I have deserved this. The sorrow I wished for another has fallen on my own guilty head. My punishment is greater than I can bear."

One glance into her despairing eyes told Elsie that no attempts at consolation would be of any avail; but she knelt down and wound her arms around the rigid form of the miserable woman.

Luke Warner came back from Haselea, heard what had occurred, and hurried to join in the quest. Margaret, too, stole in,

and carried Davy home to his bed; but no one else entered the cottage till Nancy drew back from the door to make way for a very old man, who had worked at Sheephatch from his boyhood.

Mrs. Norris swayed back in her chair as she saw him, and clung to the scarcely less agitated Elsie; but neither of them had courage to ask him what news he brought.

"You'll come home, missus, won't ye?" he groaned. "We ha' got him up out of the pit, and he's alive, and ha' spoken quite sensible, and—"

He stopped suddenly, for Mrs. Norris had fallen on her face on the floor—not insensible as they all supposed, but crushed to the earth by her own unworthiness of the mercy that was vouchsafed to her.

She went back to Sheephatch, but not alone. With the humility of a true penitent, she besought Mrs. Vere and Elsie to accompany her; and they could not refuse.

Walter had sufficiently recovered from the effects of his long exposure to be able to greet his mother, and to assure her that his injuries were limited to a broken leg and some slight bruises. Davy, whom he had found swinging on a gate beside the road when he cantered by from the town, had flung up his cap and whooped in token of his delight at the meeting. To these demonstrations Brownie was accustomed; but the young horse Walter was riding took fright, and, swerving from the direct route, galloped madly along a track through the woodland which led to the pit. The rider saw the danger, but was unable to avert it. He could only disengage his feet from the saddle, and grasp at the brushwood as he fell. The horse was killed, and its master lay beside it insensible, when Davy, astonished at the result of his noisy salute, ventured to the brink of the pit and looked into it.

The nursing of Walter devolved on his aunt, and the cares of the household on the willing Elsie. For Mrs. Norris had suddenly lost all her activity and interest in her daily duties. She sat beside her son's bed, with her once busy hands idly folded in her lap, feeling as though all strength of mind and body had forsaken her. For the first time in her life, she was utterly dependent on others. Walter was up, and limping about the farm on crutches, long before his mother shook off the lethargy that oppressed her.

Even those who best knew Mrs. Norris did not surmise the true cause of her condition, but agreed that she must be suffering from a nervous attack; and the doctor prescribed port wine and quinine, saying that she would get strong again when the summer came.

In this he proved correct; though he never knew the agonies of self-reproach, the deep abasement, and contrition Mrs. Norris experienced before she regained activity and cheerfulness. Those miserable hours left their shadow on her brow, but they also made her a changed woman; more kind and considerate to all, but to none so gentle and tender as to Walter's young wife, the once detested Elsie.

THE END.

A BRUSH WITH THE INDIANS.

IN TWO PARTS.—II.

ON the night of the 18th, two more men were selected to proceed to Fort Wallace, as it was not known whether Trudeau and Stillwell had made their way safely through the Indian lines or not. The last two selected, however, failed to elude the watchful eyes of the Indians, and were driven back to the island. This placed a gloomy look upon the probable fate of Trudeau and Stillwell, and left the little garrison in anxious doubt not only as to the safety of the two daring messengers, but as to their own final relief. On the morning of the 19th the Indians promptly renewed the conflict, but with less energy than before. They evidently did not desire or intend to come to close quarters again with their less numerous but more determined antagonists; but aimed, as on the previous day, to provoke a harmless fire from the scouts, and then, after exhausting their ammunition in this manner, overwhelm them by mass of numbers, and finish them with tomahawk and scalping knife. This style of tactics did not operate as desired.

About noon the women and children, who had been constant and excited spectators of the fight from the neighbouring hilltops, began to withdraw. It is rare indeed that in an attack by Indians their women and children are seen. They are usually sent to a place of safety until the result of the contest is known; but in this instance, with the overwhelming numbers of the savages, there seemed to the Indians to be but one

result to be expected, and that a complete, perhaps a bloodless, victory for them; and the women and children were permitted to gather as witnesses of their triumph, and perhaps at the close would be allowed to take part by torturing the white men who should be taken alive. The withdrawal of the women and children was regarded as a favourable sign by the scouts.

Soon after, and as a last resort, the Indians endeavoured to hold a parley with Forsyth, by means of a white flag; but this device was too shallow and of too common adoption to entrap the frontiersman, the object simply being to accomplish by stratagem and perfidy what they had failed in by superior numbers and open warfare. Everything now seemed to indicate that the Indians had had enough of the fight, and during the night of the third day it was plainly evident that they had about decided to withdraw from the contest.

Forsyth now wrote the following despatch, and after nightfall confided it to two of his best men, Donovan and Plyley; and they, notwithstanding the discouraging result of the last attempt, set out to try and get through to Fort Wallace with it, which they successfully accomplished.

"On Delaware Creek, Republican River,
Sept. 19, 1868.

"To Colonel Blankhead, or Commanding
Officer, Fort Wallace.

"I sent you two messengers on the night of the 17th instant, informing you of my critical condition. I tried to send two more last night, but they did not succeed in passing the Indian pickets, and returned. If the others have not arrived, then hasten at once to my assistance. I have eight badly wounded and ten slightly wounded men to take in, and every animal I had was killed, save seven which the Indians stampeded. Lieutenant Beecher is dead, and Acting Assistant-Surgeon Movers probably cannot live the night out. He was hit in the head on Thursday, and has spoken but one rational word since. I am wounded in two places—in the right thigh, and my left leg broken below the knee. The Cheyennes numbered 450 or more. Mr. Grover says they never fought so before. They were splendidly armed, with Spencer and Henry rifles. We killed at least thirty-five of them, and wounded many more, besides killing and wounding a quantity of their stock. They

carried off most of their killed during the night, but three of their men fell into our hands. I am on a little island, and have still plenty of ammunition left. We are living on mule and horse meat, and are entirely out of rations. If it was not for so many wounded, I would come in and take the chances of whipping them if attacked. They are evidently sick of their bargain.

"I had two of the members of my company killed on the 17th—namely, William Wilson and George W. Calner. You had better start with not less than seventy-five men, and bring all the waggons and ambulances you can spare. Bring a six-pounder howitzer with you. I can hold out here for six days longer, if absolutely necessary, but please to lose no time.—Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

(Signed) "GEORGE A. FORSYTH,
"U.S. Army, Commanding Co. Scouts.

"P.S.—My surgeon having been mortally wounded, none of my wounded have had their wounds dressed yet, so please bring out a surgeon with you."

A small party of warriors remained in the vicinity watching the movements of the scouts; the main body, however, had departed.

The uninjured men, relieved of the constant watching and fighting, were now able to give some attention to the wounded. Their injuries, which had grown very painful, were rudely dressed. Soup was made out of horse-flesh, and shelters were constructed protecting them from the heat, damp, and wind. On the sixth day the wounds of the men began to exhibit more decided and alarming signs of neglect. To multiply the discomforts of their situation, the entire party was almost overpowered by the intolerable stench created by the decomposing bodies of the dead horses. Their supply was nearly exhausted. Under these trying circumstances Forsyth assembled his men. He told them "they knew their situation as well as he. There were those who were helpless, but aid must not be expected too soon. It might be difficult for the messengers to reach the fort, or there might be some delay by their losing their way. Those who wished to go should do so, and leave the rest to take their chances." With one voice, they resolved to stay, and, if all hope vanished, to die together.

At last the supply of jerked horse meat

was exhausted, and the chances of getting more were gone. By this time the carcasses of the animals were a mass of corruption. There was no alternative—strips of putrid flesh were cut and eaten. The effect of this offensive diet was nauseating in the extreme. An experiment was made, with a view to improving the unpalatable flesh, of using gunpowder as salt, but to no purpose. The men allayed only their extreme cravings of hunger, trusting that succour might reach them before all was over.

On the morning of September 25, the sun rose upon Forsyth and his famished party with unusual splendour, and the bright colours of the morning horizon seemed like a rainbow of promise to their weary, longing spirits. Hope, grown faint with long waiting, gathered renewed strength from the brightness of nature. The solitary plain receding in all directions possessed a deeper interest than ever before; though it still showed no signs of life, and presented the same monotonous expanse upon which the heroic band had gazed for so many trying days. Across the dim and indefinable distance which swept in all directions the eye often wandered, and wondered what might be the revelations of the next moment. Suddenly several dark figures appeared faintly on the horizon. The objects were moving. The question uppermost in the minds of all was, Are they savages or messengers of relief? As on such occasions of anxiety and suspense, time wore heavily—minutes seemed like hours—yet each moment brought the sufferers nearer the realization whether this was their doom or their escape therefrom. Over an hour had elapsed since the objects first came in sight, and yet the mystery remained unsolved. Slowly but surely they developed themselves, until finally they had approached sufficiently near for their character as friends or foes to be unmistakably established. To the joy of the weary watchers, the parties approaching proved to be troops; relief was at hand, the dangers and anxieties of the past few days were ended, and death, either by starvation or torture at the hands of the savages, no longer stared them in the face. The strong set up a shout such as men seldom utter. It was the unburdening of the heart of the weight of despair. The wounded lifted their fevered forms and fixed their glaring eyes upon the now rapidly approaching succour, and in their delirium involun-

tarily but feebly reiterated the acclamations of their comrades.

The troops arriving for their relief were a detachment from Fort Wallace, under the command of Colonel Carpenter, of the regular Cavalry, and had started from the fort promptly upon the arrival of Trudeau and Stillwell with intelligence of the condition and peril in which Forsyth and his party were.

When Colonel Carpenter and his men reached the island, they found its defenders in a most pitiable condition, yet the survivors were determined to be plucky to the last. Forsyth himself, with rather indifferent success, affected to be reading an old novel that he had discovered in a saddle-bag; but Colonel Carpenter said his voice was a little unsteady, and his eyes somewhat dim, when he held out his hand to Carpenter and bade him welcome to "Beecher's Island," a name that has since been given to the battleground.

During the fight Forsyth counted thirty-two dead Indians within rifle range of the island. Twelve Indian bodies were subsequently discovered in one pit, and five in another. The Indians themselves confessed to a loss of seventy-five killed in action, and when their proclivity for concealing or diminishing the number of their slain in battle is considered, we can readily believe that their actual loss in this fight must have been much greater than they would have us believe.

Of the scouts, Lieutenant Beecher, Surgeon Movers, and six of the men were either killed outright or died of their wounds; eight more were disabled for life; of the remaining twelve who were wounded, nearly all recovered completely. During the fight, innumerable interesting incidents occurred, some laughable and some serious. On the first day of the conflict a number of young Indian boys, from fifteen to eighteen years of age, crawled up and shot about fifty arrows into the circle in which the scouts lay. One of these arrows struck one of the men, Frank Herrington, full in the forehead. Not being able to pull it out, one of his companions, lying in the same hole with him, cut off the arrow with his knife, leaving the iron arrow-head sticking in his frontal bone; in a moment a bullet struck him in the side of the head, glanced across his forehead, impinged upon the arrow-head, and the two fastened together fell to the

ground—a queer but successful piece of amateur surgery. Herrington wrapped a cloth around his head, which bled profusely, and continued fighting as if nothing had happened.

Howard Morton, another of the scouts, was struck in the head by a bullet, which finally lodged in the rear of one of his eyes, completely destroying its sight for ever; but Morton never faltered, but fought bravely until the savages finally withdrew. Hudson Farley, a young stripling of only eighteen, whose father was mortally wounded in the first day's fight, was shot through the shoulder, yet never mentioned the fact until dark, when the list of wounded was called for. McCall, the First Sergeant, Vilott, Clark, Farley the elder, and others who were wounded, continued to bear their full share of the fight, notwithstanding their great sufferings, until the Indians finally gave up and withdrew.

A BRIGHT LIGHT.

UNTIL some chemical genius shall contrive parish suns which, suspended at a certain height in the air, will furnish enough light to illuminate our streets, and houses as well, we grovelling mortals must content ourselves with such contrivances as human skill devises from year to year. Not that there has been much cause for complaint, so ingenious have been the designs to compensate those households where gas is not, for some reason or another, come-atable. The middle-aged can easily run over in their own minds the lighting up of the domestic temple, from the days of mould candles, which always wanted snuffing, up through the various advances in composite, and the various oil lamps, till that great Yankee in the far West "struck ile." The discovery of the mineral oils was the inauguration of a new régime, and since then many have been the attempts to produce such a lamp as shall ensure a brilliant light, perfect combustion of the oil, safety, and absence of all unpleasant odour. This has been most successfully achieved by Messrs. King and Browne, of 93, Wigmore-street, whose Brighton lamp gives forth a clear, bright, and intensely white light, coupled with an utter freedom from any smell whatever, and a perfect immunity from all risk of explosion. The pure whiteness of the light, which cannot fail to strike even the most

careless observer, is due to the perfect combustion secured by the large and carefully adjusted air-hole, whilst its intensity is increased by the presence of a metal button placed a short distance above the circular wick, whereby the flame and light are both diffused around. The application of this button, coupled with the circular wick, resembling that of the old moderator, form the leading features of the lamp. Freedom from smell and from the danger of explosion is secured by the interposition between the burner and the receptacle below, containing the oil, of a non-conducting material. By this means all chance of the material becoming volatilized is entirely prevented, no matter how long the lamp may have been burning. So equable, too, is the diffusion of heat above, that cracked chimneys are a thing quite unknown in dealing with this lamp.

The amount of oil consumed by an ordinary-sized drawing-room lamp, giving a light of the utmost brightness and purity, and equal to from 23 to 25 sperm candles, averages about two ounces per hour, so that its economical advantages need no recapitulation. A larger size, equal to from 30 to 40 candles, has been introduced for illuminating halls, passages, &c., and for this purpose has been largely adopted in many of the largest mansions. These lamps are fitted with those large circular globes technically styled "moons," and diffuse a light as soft, bright, and equable as that of their sponsor luminary. As a substitute for the dear and bad gas which we seem fated to put up with in these latter days they are unparalleled, whilst the Brighton table lamp bids fair to dethrone all other rivals in the parlour, the study, or the drawing-room.

TABLE TALK.

BELGIUM enjoys the reputation of having carried the manufacture of lace to its highest perfection. Recently an ingenious improvement has been made in lace manufacture, which consists in an arrangement of the hooks or needles so as to be capable of working independently of each other, and operated by Jacquard patterns, cards, or cylinders, with the thread guards all mounted on one bar. By means of this arrangement the patterns can be varied to a great extent, and the advantage is gained of greater simplicity of operation. In order to realize

why fine lace commands so high a price, one should understand how complicated is the making of it. The thread of Brussels lace, for example, is not only of exquisite fineness, but must be spun in dark underground rooms, where it is moist enough to prevent the thread from separating. It is so delicate that it can scarcely be seen, and all the light admitted to the room is arranged to fall upon the work. On a piece of Valenciennes not two inches wide, from two to three hundred bobbins are sometimes used, and for the larger width as many as eight hundred on the same pillow. The most valuable of this description of lace is determined by the number of times the bobbins have been twisted in making the ground, as the more frequent the twists the clearer and more beautiful is the fabric. Belgium annually sells of this lace alone to the value of more than four million dollars.

NITRO GLYCERINE will not endure being stoned: it retaliates. Most sensible persons nowadays understand its disposition, and deal with it accordingly. But not so did four young men. They went out shooting one day, and not finding much game, resolved to find some mischief to do. They happened to pass an enclosed piece of ground. Upon each side of the enclosing fence there was a notice warning every one that it was dangerous to go near or touch the contents of the enclosure, as it was nitro-glycerine in cans. However unsuitable it

might be to leave an explosive substance in such a place, it does not excuse the recklessness which followed. The young men threw stones at the cans, supposing that they were at a safe distance. The result was that two of them were blown into fragments, and the others seriously injured.

HUSBAND MEANS SIMPLY band, or stay, of the house. Wife belongs to the same class of words as web, weave, and woof. It is quite evident that, when our language was forming, there was no conception even of such wives as those we see sometimes nowadays.

FUDGE, ACCORDING to D'Israeli, is derived from the name of an old sea-captain, whose reputation for truthfulness does not seem to have been all that one could desire. Our authority quotes from a pamphlet entitled "Remarks upon the Navy," published early in the eighteenth century, as follows: "There was in our time one Captain Fudge, commander of a merchantman, who, upon his return from a voyage, how ill-fraught soever his ship was, always brought home his owners a good cargo of lies; so much so that now aboard ship the sailors, when they hear a great lie told, cry out, 'You fudge it!'"

Terms of Subscription to ONCE A WEEK, free by post:—Weekly Numbers for Six Months, 5s. 5d.; Monthly Parts, 5s. 8d.

The next number of ONCE A WEEK will commence a New Series, altered in size and type, and liberally illustrated. The intention is to make the magazine light, bright, and sparkling; and to that end the New Series will open with a novel by the Author of "Anguish in Print."

